NATION

Kuwait fire: Bodies of 31 received in Kerala

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Inflation rises to 15-month high of 2.61%

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

England eye dominant show to stay in Super 8

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 15 JUNE 2024 | SATURDAY | BENGALURU | 8 DHU'L-HIJJAH, 1445 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 144| Pages: 8

WE ARE HIRING

SUB-EDITOR
WEB EDITOR
REPORTER

Journalism degree preferred but not essential

Applicants with maximum 2 years of experience preferred. Freshers are encouraged to apply

SEND YOUR CV TO

hrsalarnews@gmail.com
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

Modi meets Zelenskyy, bats for dialogue amid war

Modi said the way to peace is via dialogue and diplomacy

BARI, 14 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday conveyed to Ukranian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that India would continue to do everything within its means to support a peaceful solution to the Ukraine conflict.

He also said that the way to peace is through "dialogue and diplomacy".

The upcoming Swiss peace conference for Ukraine also figured in the Modi-Zelenskyy talks held on the margins of the G7 summit in Italy's Apulia and the Ukranian President thanked Modi for sending a high-level delegation to the conclave in over the weekend in Switzerland.

In the meeting, Modi told Zelenskyy that India believes in a "human-centric" approach.

Modi described the meeting with the Ukranian president as "very productive" and said India is eager to "further cement" bilateral relations with Ukraine. "We discussed the development of bilateral relations and trade, in particular in the context of the Black Sea export corridor functioning," Zelenskyy said ion 'X'. "We explored the possibility of exchanging experience in the use of new technologies in agriculture," he said. Switzerland is hosting several global leaders on 15 and 16 June in an attempt to chart a roadmap for brining peace to Ukraine. The Indian delegation at the summit is expected to be headed by a senior diplomat.

Modi meets Sunak

Modi also met his British counterpart Rishi Sunak and reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthen the India-UK strategic partnership in the third term of the NDA government and reviewed the progress made in the ongoing FTA negotiations.

"The leaders discussed the implementation of the Roadmap 2030 and expressed happiness on progress in all areas of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership including regular high-level political consultations, defence and security, trade and economic collaboration, critical and high technology sectors and people-to-people ties," the statement said. The two leaders then agreed to accelerate the FTA talks with the hope of signing off before India's general election. However, the trade talks are now expected to resume only after a new UK government is elected on 4 July.

The India-UK FTA negotiations, which opened in January 2022, are aimed at significantly enhancing bilateral trade – currently worth around 38.1 billion pounds a year as per official statistics from earlier this year.

Modi and Macron discuss strategic ties

Modi meet with French President Emmanuel Macron for fourth time in one year.

The meeting with Macron is Modi's first official bilateral meeting with an international leader since taking charge for his third term as Prime Minister earlier this month.

Modi also conveyed his best wishes to Macron on the hosting of the Paris Olympics, which begins next month. France will host the 2024 Summer Olympics from 26 July to 11 August

The two leaders reviewed India-France bilateral relations, focusing on the 'Horizon 2047' Roadmap and the Indo-Pacific Roadmap. Discussions included cooperation in defence, nuclear, space, education, climate action, digital public infrastructure, connectivity and cultural initiatives such as the National Museum partnership and enhancing people-to-people ties. The two leaders agreed to further intensify strategic defence cooperation with an increased focus on 'Make in India'. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with PM Narendra Modi and during a meeting on the sidelines of G7 Summit, in Apulia, Italy, Friday ***PHOTO: AP***

Putin vows truce if Ukraine exits Moscow-occupied areas

Russian President Vladimir Putin promised Friday to "immediately" order a cease-fire in Ukraine and begin negotiations if Kyiv started withdrawing troops from the four regions annexed by Moscow in 2022 and renounced plans to join NATO. Such a deal appears a nonstarter for Kyiv, which wants to join the military alliance and has demanded that Russia withdraw its troops from all of its territory. His remarks came as leaders of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations met in Italy and as Switzerland prepared to host scores of world leaders -- but not from Moscow -- this weekend.

>>>More on Page 6

₹50,000 CR DEAL

India, France negotiate 26 Rafale jet deal

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

India and France are carrying out negotiations for the price and other related issues for the all-important 26 Rafale Marine fighter aircraft deal for the Indian Navy.

The talks were earlier supposed to be held on 30 May but were postponed to June second week, apparently in view of the pending election process of the Lok Sabha polls.

"The French delegation is in New Delhi, including officials from their Directorate General of Armament which is looking after the sale of the Rafale jets to India," defence sources told ANI.

The Indian side in these government-to-government talks is represented by the officials from the Directorate General of Acquisition under the Ministry of Defence and other military officers from the user side, they said.

The overall project is likely to be worth over Rs 50,000 crore and would help increase the number of these advanced aircraft in the Indian inventory to 62 with the existing 36 in the Air Force fleet.

PHOTO: PTI

The aircraft would be operated from the aircraft carriers of the Indian Navy including the INS Vikramaditya and the INS Vikrant.

As per the plans, the Indian Navy will deploy these aircraft at the INS Degha in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh as their home base.

France had submitted its response to India's tender for buying 26 Rafale Marine jets for the Indian Navy's aircraft carriers - INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya in December last year. —*ANI*

Professional courses see 10% fee hike in K'taka

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

The fee for professional courses in private unaided technical educational institutions is set to increase by 10 per cent, the State government said on Friday. According to a press release, Higher Education Minister MC Sudhakar and Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil with representatives of private aided and unaided professional educational institutions held a consensus discussion, later arriving on this decision. Private educational institution union had demanded the State government to increase the fees by 15 per cent but after the discussion the committee came to a decision to increase the fee by 10 per cent than last year's fee.

—Salar News

2 MORE OF DARSHAN'S ACCOMPLICES ARRESTED IN RENUKASWAMY MURDER

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Two more people were arrested on Friday in the Renukaswamy murder case, in which Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa is an accused along with his friend Pavithra Gowda, police sources said. Jagadish and Anukumar were taken into custody from the district headquarters town of Chitradurga by a team led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Dinakar.

They are reportedly involved in kidnapping Renukaswamy from Chitradurga, the sources said. Darshan, popularly known as "Challenging Star", and 12 of his close associates were arrested on Tuesday for the murder of the 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor. —*ANI*

>>More on Page 2

Arundhati to be prosecuted under UAPA

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena has accorded sanction to prosecute author Arundhati Roy and a former professor in Kashmir under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for allegedly making provocative speeches at an event here in 2010, Raj Niwas officials said on Friday.

FIR against Roy and former Central University of Kashmir professor Sheikh Showkat Hussain was registered following the orders of the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, New Delhi, they added.

Arundhati Roy ***PHOTO: PTI***

The FIR in the matter was registered on a complaint made by Sushil Pandit, a social activist from Kashmir, on 28 October, 2010. It was alleged Arundhati strongly propagated that Kashmir was never part of India and was forcibly occupied by the Armed Forces of India. Roy has been a vocal critic of the Modi government. —*PTI*

TO HEAR PLEA SOON

9 move Bombay HC over college's ban on hijab

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

Nine students have moved the Bombay High Court challenging a directive issued by their college imposing a ban on hijab, burka and naqab in the classroom.

In their petition, the girls said the ban imposed by the Chembur Trombay Education Society' s NG Acharya and DK Marathe College was "arbitrary, unreasonable, bad-in-law and perverse".

A bench headed by Justice AS Chandurkar will hear the petition next week.

As per the plea, on 1 May, a notice along with a message was circulated on the college's WhatsApp group, which includes faculty members and students, imposing a dress code restriction on burka, naqab, hijab, badges, cap and stole. The petitioners, who are second and third year degree students, said such a directive was "nothing but colourable exercise of power". The naqab, burka and hijab are an integral part of the petitioners' religious belief and imposing a ban on it was violative of their fundamental rights, the plea contended. The petitioners initially requested the college management and principal to withdraw the restriction on naqab, burka and hijab. They also raised their grievance against the notice with the chancellor and vice chancellor of the University as well as University Grants Commission requesting their intervention. —*PTI*

'Send Hindu children in MP madrasas to schools'

BHOPAL, 14 JUNE

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Chairperson Priyank Kanoongo on Friday asked the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh to shift Hindu children studying at madrasas to ordinary schools, stating that these Islamic institutions do not come under the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

As many as 9,417 Hindu children are studying at 1,755 registered madrasas in Madhya Pradesh, and these institutions lack infrastructure as mandated under the RTE Act, he said.

He also said that Muslim children studying at unregistered madrasas too should be shifted to ordinary schools.

"I request the MP government to pull out Hindu children studying in madrasas," Kanoongo told reporters.

The NCPCR Chief was here to hold meetings with various state departments with regard to protection of child rights.

"The Act under which the MP Madarsa Board came into being defines madrasas and clearly states that Islamic religious education should be imparted in them. Section 1 of the Right to Education Act excludes madrasas from the purview of the Right to Education Act," Kanoongo said. According to the information with the NCPCR, teachers at these madrasas do not have the B.Ed. degree and have not taken the Teacher Eligibility Test, he claimed, adding that their infrastructure too is not in accordance with the RTE Act. —*PTI*

Pawan Kalyan named Andhra DyCM; gets Rural Development

AMARAVATI, 14 JUNE

The Andhra Pradesh government on Friday designated Janasena chief Pawan kalyan as Deputy Chief Minister.

The actor-turned-politician has been allotted Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Environment, Forests, and Science and Technology portfolios. Rural Water Supply department would also be handled by Kalyan.

"Congratulations to Pawan Kalyan on becoming the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh," said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in a post on X.

Noting that the new ministers have taken a solemn oath to serve the people of Andhra Pradesh and usher in an era of people's governance, Naidu exuded confidence that all the ministers will strive to deliver and meet people's expectations.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's son Nara Lokesh was given Human Resources Development, Information Technology and Communication portfolios.

Pawan kalyan ***PHOTO: PTI***

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will hold the portfolios of General Administration Department (GAD), Public Enterprises and all other portfolios not allocated to any minister.

Along with Naidu, the Cabinet is 25-member strong and includes those from the Janasena and BJP. It is an amalgamation of 17 freshers and eight experienced ministers. Eight ministers come from BC communities, one Muslim, two SCs and an ST, among others.

Besides Naidu, 20 ministers belong to TDP, three are from Janasena and one from BJP. —*PTI*

1.2K TOURISTS STRANDED DUE TO SIKKIM LANDSLIDE

GANGTOK, 14 JUNE

More than 1,200 tourists, including 15 foreigners, were stranded as massive landslides triggered by incessant rainfall caused devastation in northern Sikkim's Mangan district, an official said on Friday.

The office of the chief secretary has already initiated talks with the Centre for airlifting of all the tourists, depending on the weather conditions, Sikkim Tourism & Civil Aviation Department's Principal Secretary CS Rao said in a statement.

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang chaired a high-level meeting in Mintokgang to take stock of the situation after landslides triggered by heavy rain impacted the Himalayan state severely, damaging properties and disrupting road connectivity, power and food supplies, and mobile networks in several areas. "As per the ground report, around 1,200 domestic and 15 foreign tourists (Thailand: two, Nepal: three, Bangladesh:10) are stranded in Lachung, Mangan district due to road blockages caused by heavy rainfall and landslides," Rao said in the statement. —*PTI*

HUNDREDS SCAMMED ONLINE

Govt warns against fake safari bookings

MYSURU, 14 JUNE

In light of emerging fake online bookings for jungle safaris, the forest department has issued a notice warning tourists about the scams. They have urged tourists to exercise caution while making online reservations.

They have asked tourists visiting Kakanakote Safari Nanachi and Veeranahosalli Safari Centre, which are part of the HD Kote Nagarahole National Park, to be particularly vigilant. The fraudulent website, with images of Nagarahole National Park, appears in search results when tourists look for online safari reservations. Those booking through the fraudulent websites eventually end up losing money.

PHOTO: PTI

- Once payments are made, the fraudulent websites neither send confirmation messages nor issue tickets. In some cases, the tourists are notified with fake confirmation.

Once payments are made, the fraudulent websites neither send confirmation messages nor issue tickets. In some cases, the tourists are notified with fake confirmation. Upon arriving at the safari centre, they realise they have been scammed.

This issue came to light when hundreds of tourists complained at Nanachi Safari Center. In January 2024, the Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) of Hunsur sub-division Harsha Kumar, filed a formal complaint with the Superintendent of Police in Kodagu district.

Although the fraudulent website disappeared for a while it has now resurfaced, causing renewed concern. To prevent further incidents, DCF Harsha Kumar has advised tourists to only register on the official website of the forest department or to purchase tickets directly at the safari centre.

Tourists are reminded to be cautious and verify the authenticity of the websites before making any online reservations for safaris.

—Salar News

Kuwait fire: Body of Kalaburagi man to reach today

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Kalaburagi man's mortal remains who died in Kuwait apartment blaze will reach the district on Saturday at 6.30 am. Vijayakumar Prasanna , 41, from Sarasamba village in Aland taluk was employed in Kuwait as a truck driver for the past ten years. , He was the first among those who were identified. Arathi Krishna deputy chairman, NRI forum, government of Karnataka took to X and said, "Saddened to confirm the death of Vijay Kumar Prassana." He was employed in Kuwait as a truck driver for the past 10 years. Prassana is survived by his wife, three children and his parents. The fire that broke out in a seven storey building in Kuwait on Wednesday killed 49 people and injured around 50 people. The building housed about 196 migrant workers in Mangaf, South of Kuwait. —*PTI*

Purple Line Metro services to be disrupted on Monday

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

A Commuters travelling on Bengaluru Metro's Purple Line between Kengeri and Challaghatta stations will be facing a major inconvenience on Monday. To facilitate scheduled maintenance activity at Challaghatta station, train services will be unavailable from 5am to 1pm. nNormal metro services will resume on the entire Purple Line between Challaghatta and Whitefield after 1pm. Green Line metro services will not be affected and will operate normally throughout the day. —*Salar News*

Mom arrested for killing mentally-ill daughter in City

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

A City police arrested a 35-year-old housewife, Ramya, residing in Manjunath Nagar, for allegedly strangling her mentally-ill three-year-old daughter to death. Ramya and her husband who were married for 11 years had twin daughters. Preetika reportedly suffered from a mental illness. Reportedly, Ramya was anguished over of her daughter's condition and inability to attend school due to her illness and allegedly killed the child. —*Salar News*

2 rowdy sheeters held for gambling, fraud & extortion

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Basaveshwaranagar police have arrested two rowdy sheeters involved in gambling, fraud and extortion in City. Ashok Kumar Adiga has 7 cases registered against him in the last two years. Manoj R Adiga from Kodigehalli has been involved in serious crimes like murder, attempt to murder and kidnapping since 2016. Both were arrested under Goonda Act and Preventive Detention Act. Maid held for theft In a separate case, Hal asuru police have arrested a domestic worker employed in a house in Jogupalya for stealing gold bars weighing about 225 grams and valued at Rs 16 lakh. Gambling den busted Indiranagar police raided an illegal gambling operation running under the guise of a poker club named 'Tilt Room' and 'Maya Gaming And Technologies Private Ltd'. A total of 21 people were arrested, and cash and gambling chips were seized. The club is being investigated for multiple offences, including violating court orders and allowing smoking on the premises. —*Salar News*

HC restrains CID from arresting BSY

BSY will appear before CID on 17 June in POCSO case

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

A court on Thursday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Yediyurappa under POCSO Act *PHOTO: PTI*

Karnataka High Court on Friday restrained Criminal Investigation Department (CID) from arresting former chief minister BS Yediyurappa in POCSO case registered against him.

It also directed the veteran BJP leader to appear before CID, which is probing the case, on 17 June.

A Bengaluru court on Thursday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Yediyurappa in the case registered against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act on 14 March this year.

Yediyurappa had sought time to join the probe.

According to reports, the veteran BJP leader has gone to an "undisclosed" location in New Delhi.

According to police, Yediyurappa has been booked on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who alleged that he molested her daughter during a meeting on 2 February, at his residence in Dollars Colony here.

High Court, which adjourned the hearing for two weeks, during the hearing observed that the 81-year-old Yediyurappa is now in the sunset of his life and it is not appropriate to arrest him.

Noting that Yediyurappa had sent a letter to the police volunteering to appear for inquiry on July 17, Meanwhile, Home Minister G Parameshwara said that with a non-bailable arrest warrant against him in a POCSO case, it will be "good" if Yediyurappa comes back to Bengaluru soon and appears before CID.

When asked about BJP alleging "vendetta politics" on the part of the ruling Congress, Parameshwara said: "They have to say such things, what else can they say?"

Answering a question as to why the police was "silent" for three months and all of a sudden is now acting on the case after the Lok Sabha election polls are over, the Minister said: "investigation was on, FSL reports had to come. Procedurally what has to be done is being done, because he (Yediyurappa) is a senior leader, a VIP. So after proper verification they (police) are going ahead because if anything is wrong it will come on them."

Asked about "reports" that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had allegedly instructed for Yediyurappa's arrest, during his recent visit to Bengaluru, Parameshwara outrightly rejected them .

Meanwhile, hitting out at the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government, BJP said following the "humiliating defeat" in the elections, Congress leaders have become busy plotting various conspiracies against the BJP.

BJP alleged that In light of the corruption charges involving Minister B Nagendra (who subsequently resigned) in the Maharshi Valmiki Development Corporation and the subsequent allegations against the government itself, Congress has devised a conspiracy to divert attention by maligning Yediyurappa.

—*PTI*

No pressure on govt to favour Darshan, says DKS

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

DK Shivakumar *PHOTO: PTI*

- He also refuted BJP's allegations against Congress government of indulging in "hate politics"

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday rubbished reports that the government is under pressure from "influential people" to favour Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who has been arrested in connection with a murder case.

He also refuted BJP's allegations against Congress government of indulging in "hate politics", following the arrest warrant against its leader and former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa in a POCSO case.

"There is no pressure from anyone, neither our Home Minister nor anyone else is involved (interfering) in it (investigation), we are not recommending anything, we don't know anything," Shivakumar said in response to a question that some influential people are exerting pressure on the government in the Darshan case.

Regarding allegations that "royal treatment" was being given to Darshan at the police station where he is held and pandals were erected there to maintain "secrecy", Shivakumar said: "I inquired with the police.

There are 13 accused there (at the police station), as you (media) stand with your cameras there from morning till evening, they (police) need an opportunity to work freely, so they have put (erected a pandal) there."

HM denies reports of Darshan getting "royal treatment"

Meanwhile, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara denied reports that "royal treatment" was being given to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and his associates at a police station here, where they are held after their arrest in connection with a murder case.

He said Darshan is being given similar treatment as given to any other accused, adding that neither 'Biryani' was served nor special facilities were being provided to him.

"I will instruct the police to take necessary measures in the interest of the public, but we should also let them investigate freely. It is not possible for police to give Biryani and royal treatment to the accused. It is not done and it should not be done," Parameshwara told reporters. —*PTI/Salar News*

DKS planned to field Darshan from Channapatna: BJP

RAMANAGARA, 14 JUNE

BJP leader CP Yogeshwara on Friday claimed that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and his brother and former MP DK Suresh had planned to field, Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who has been arrested in connection with a murder case, as Congress candidate in the upcoming Channapatna Assembly bypoll.

Channapatna bypoll is necessitated as the segment fell vacant following the election of its representative -- JD(S) leader and former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy -- to Lok Sabha.

"Their surprise candidate is behind bars now, I know who their surprise candidate is. Whom they wanted to field is caught in a murder case and is behind bars. Let the surprise candidate or anyone come, both parties (BJP and JD(S)) are ready for polls," the MLC, a former Minister, told reporters in response to a question on Suresh's recent statement about fielding a surprise candidate.

"The former MP (Suresh) was speaking about a surprise candidate. The person who is now caught in a murder case, they wanted that person as their surprise candidate, but it is not possible now. Maybe now they might look for another surprise candidate, let's see," he said.

He said: "He is a film star who has campaigned more for Congress. In the days to come they wanted to induct him in the Congress and the DK brothers (Shivakumar and Suresh) had planned to face the election through him."

—*PTI*

Siddaramaiah asks to implement complementary projects *PHOTO: PTI*

Prioritise improvement in human growth index: CM

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said priority should be given to the implementation of complementary projects to improve the Human Development Index of the Kalyana Karnataka region.

The suggestion came as he reviewed the progress of Kalyana Karnataka Regional Development Board at his home office Krishna here.

He said emphasis should be laid on areas in which we are lagging behind. Emphasis should also be on infrastructure development at hostels, anganwadis and residential schools.

In a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office, Siddaramaiah said the available grants should be spent on a priority areas. Roads, drinking water, irrigation and other infrastructure should also be prioritised. Siddaramaiah also pointed out the need for coordination between district in-charge ministers and secretaries.

He told officials that tenders should be called immediately for the approved works for which tenders have not been called and said they (works) should be evaluated.

According to officials, for the year 2023-24, the largest grant of Rs 3,000 crore has been released to Kalyan Karnataka Regional Development Board (KKRDB). A sum of Rs 2009.53 crore including initial charges have been spent during this period.

Chairman of the board Ajay Singh said this is the highest expenditure incurred till now since the formation of the board.

He further said Rs 2,885.9 crore is currently available with the board. Since the formation of the board, till now, 35,724 works have been approved and 26,418 works have been completed. In the year 2023-24, out of 6,468 works, 136 works were completed and 3,226 were in progress.

He explained that 3,106 works are to be started. Regular progress review of pending works should be done and any bottlenecks in implementation should be removed.

—*PTI*

OVER TORTURE & BLACKMAIL

FIR lodged against Somanna's son

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

V Somanna, Minister of State for Railways *PHOTO: X/ @ARUNSOMANNA*

An FIR has been lodged against the son of Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti, V Somanna in connection with a complaint by a couple here alleging blackmail and torture.

The FIR filed against Arun Somanna was registered as per the direction of the 37th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) in Bengaluru. The FIR also names two other people: Jeevan Kumar, a resident of Dasarahalli, and Pramod Rao, a resident of Hebbal.

The FIR has been filed under IPC Sections 506, 34, 504, 387, 420, 477A, 323, 327, and 354 D. The petition was filed by Trupthi, a resident of Sanjaynagar. She has alleged that the accused committed fraud in an event management company and issued life threats to her and her husband, Madhwaraj.

According to the FIR, Trupthi and Madhwaraj ran an event management company for 23 years. Arun was introduced to Madhwaraj in 2013 at a government function. The company also organised the birthday party of Arun's daughter in 2017.

Later, Arun and Madhwaraj started a company together under a partnership. When the business incurred a loss, Arun allegedly did not inform Madhwaraj, who was later forced to resign from the partnership. The petitioner claimed that her family was threatened by rowdies, and her husband was locked up in a dark room and subjected to torture. —*Salar News*

40 held in Channagiri attack

DAVANGERE, 14 JUNE

- The unrest began following the death of Adil, a resident of Tippunagar, Channagiri town, in police custody on 24 May. The ensuing riot saw a crowd besiege the police station and causing damage

The police have arrested 40 individuals so far in the stone-pelting incident near Channagiri police station. The police have intensified their operations, focusing primarily on suspects from Honnebagi village in Channagiri taluk.

District Superintendent of Police Uma Prashant has assured the safety of the public with the upcoming Bakrid festival. The unrest began following the death of Adil, a resident of Tippunagar, Channagiri town, in police custody on 24 May.

The ensuing riot saw a crowd besiege the police station and causing significant damage to both the station and a vehicle. Investigations revealed that a substantial number of the rioters were from Honnebagi village.

In response to the escalating situation, Prashant has emphasised the importance of community reassurance. I have said that no innocent people should be arrested. Bakrid festival is coming, let everyone come to the village and celebrate the festival." she said. —*Salar News*

HC halts felling of trees for Suburban Rail Project in City

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

High Court has imposed a temporary halt on the felling of nearly 700 trees for Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP) Corridor 2. The interim order applies to the section between Bennigana Halli and Chikkabanavara railway stations.

A division bench led by Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Aravind issued the order on Wednesday while hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Dattatreya T Devere and the Bangalore Environment Trust. The petitioners had approached the court seeking a tree census in Bengaluru.

This move comes after the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)'s Deputy Conservator of Forests, acting as the Tree Officer, issued a memorandum on 29 May, 2024, authorising wthe felling of 699 trees for the project. The memorandum also mentioned the translocation of 89 trees.

The Court's order is a temporary stay, and the next hearing is likely to determine the fate of the trees. This development highlights the ongoing debate between infrastructure development and environmental protection in Bengaluru.

—*Salar News*

BRAND BENGALURU INITIATIVE

Govt allots Rs 310 crore for a greener Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

DyCM DK Shivakumar plants saplings with school students at a programme held to celebrate World Environment Day at Bal Bhavan *PHOTO: SALAR*

The State govenment has set aside Rs 310 crore to beat climate crisis and a greener Bengaluru. The money will be allocated to improve park groundwater levels, creation of new parks, construct 1,000 rainwater harvesting wells, development of existing lakes, and 100 new composting plants to manage park waste sustainably, said Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar during a press conference at Jawahar Bal Bhavan, on Friday.

BBMP is launching a multi-pronged attack on environmental issues with the "Brand Bengaluru" initiative and Bengaluru Climate Action Plan.

Shivakumar said that two lakh more saplings will be planted in Bengaluru by school students this year as part of 'Hasiru Rakshaka' programme.

Speaking to reporters at the World Environment Day 2024 event, organised under the Brand Bengaluru initiative, at Cubbon Park, he said, "School students have already planted 52,000 saplings as part of the Hasiru Rakshaka (saviour of greenery) programme till now. We will tie up with more schools and ensure that two lakh saplings are planted this year." Students can track their sapling's health through the Green Guard mobile app and earn "Green Guardian" certificates for successful care over three years.

"Bengaluru's temperatures rarely used to cross 28 degrees but now it has crossed 36 degrees. Our government has set aside Rs 310 crore for greening Bengaluru City under various departments. The 15th Finance Commission has also allocated Rs 100 crore for environment conservation in Bengaluru. School students should plant and nurture saplings with all the care so that our future is secure," he said. "About 200 taluks faced severe drought due to lack of rains in the State. Bengaluru too went through water shortage. Programmes like Hasiru Rakshaka will ensure that such droughts don't occur in future. " —*Salar News*

'Service roads to be developed post metro constructions'

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath has instructed City officials to expedite the development of service roads and footpaths on Outer Ring Road (ORR) in areas where Metro construction has been completed. Addressing a press conference on Friday at Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA) in partnership with BBMP, Metro and Jalmandali, Nath emphasised the urgency of conducting a joint inspection in Mahadevapura zone to identify and address areas needing attention. Nath highlighted the necessity of maintaining 22 major roads. —*Salar News*

DKS to inspect Cauvery Phase 5 project completion

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is set to conduct an inspection aimed at accelerating the completion of the Cauvery Phase 5 water project, according to Jalmandal Chairman Ram Prasat Manohar.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Manohar revealed that on the Deputy Chief Minister's directive, tests are being conducted on the final stage of the project. A review by Shivakumar will soon provide the necessary guidance to complete the remaining work, with further details on the public launch of the project to follow.

During the recent water testing of Cauvery Phase 5, water supply was briefly halted, leading to air locks and water supply disruptions in some areas. However, Manohar assured that these issues will be resolved within the next two days. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: X/@PSTamangGolay

Sikkim CM vacates Soreng-Chakung constituency

GANGTOK, 14 JUNE

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Friday announced his decision to vacate Soreng-Chakung assembly constituency and continue to represent Rhenock seat. The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha supremo was elected from the two seats in the assembly elections. The SKM swept the polls, winning 31 of the 32 constituencies. The announcement came a day before the SKM supremo was bound to take a decision as per the Conduct of Election Rules 1961, under Section 67/A, which mandates that one of the two constituencies must be relinquished within 14 days of the announcement of results. "Tomorrow, 15th June, marks the last day for this decision. Thus, with a heavy heart, I must make this crucial announcement, today," Tamang said. *—PTI*

Was keen on RS nomination, says NCP's Bhujbal

PUNE, 14 JUNE

Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal said on Friday that he desires to become an MP and that's why he wanted to contest the Lok Sabha polls from Nashik and was also keen on Rajya Sabha nomination. Bhujbal was replying to questions over reports claiming that he was upset after Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and NCP president Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar was nominated for the Upper House. Asked if injustice was meted out to him over Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha tickets, the prominent OBC leader said the question should be asked to "them". Sunetra on Thursday filed nomination papers as the NCP candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha bypoll, days after she lost the Lok Sabha elections from Baramati. *—PTI*

ED attaches ₹4K cr worth building linked to ex-MLC

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has attached the building and land of a university in Saharanpur worth Rs 4,440 crore as part of a money laundering probe against "absconding" former Uttar Pradesh BSP MLC Mohammed Iqbal and his family. Land measuring 121 acres and the building of Glocal University has been frozen after a provisional attachment order was issued by the federal probe agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. These properties are registered in the name of Abdul Waheed Educational and Charitable Trust which is "managed and run" by Mohammed Iqbal and his family members, ED said. *—PTI*

Jharkhand govt to waive farm loans up to ₹2 lakh

RANCHI, 14 JUNE

Jharkhand Agriculture Minister Badal Patralekh on Friday said the state government has decided to waive farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh, in an effort to give relief to over 1.91 lakh farmers. During a meeting with officials of the State Level Bankers' Committee here, the minister asked the banks to present a proposal in this regard. "Loans ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh taken by farmers till 31 March, 2020 will be waived through one-time settlement," the minister said. In 2021-22, the state government had announced waiver of crop loans up to Rs 50,000, he said. "As per its promise, the state government had waived loans up to Rs 50,000 of more than 4.73 lakh farmers... The Jharkhand government has given an amount of over Rs 1,900 crore to banks," Patralekh said. *—PTI*

Will put an end to 'scams' like NEET, says Stalin

He says education is the only asset that no one can steal

CHENNAI, 14 JUNE

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday said he would put an end to entrance test "scams" like the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical courses and ensure unhindered access to education.

He asserted that education is the only asset that no one can steal. "But even in that we are seeing entrance test scams like the NEET. That's why we are opposing it strongly," Stalin said.

Tamil Nadu was the first to say that NEET was a scam and now the entire country has started saying so, he said while speaking at a school education department function here.

"We will surely end this one day. It's our responsibility. Society, financial or political situation should not be a barrier to your education. This is my aim and also that of our Dravidian model of governance," Stalin who is the President of the DMK said at the event.

He urged the students to "read, read, and keep reading without stopping anywhere.

"Keep moving forward. There should not be any full stop in front of your eyes... keep winning, keep shining, make Tamil Nadu proud," he advised. He announced that the 'Tamil Pudhalvan' scheme of providing Rs 1,000 monthly financial assistance to students of state-run schools to pursue higher education will be launched in August.

About 43 students who scored full marks in the subject of Tamil in the class X and class XII public exams, and headmasters of 1,728 schools that scored cent per cent in the board exams for 2023-24, besides students who excelled in national sport events, were felicitated by the chief minister on the occasion.

Ministers Udhayanidhi Stalin, Ma Subramanian, PK Sekarbabu and Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi, as well as Chennai Mayor R Priya and senior officials were among those who were present. *—PTI*

We will surely end this one day. It's our responsibility. Society, financial or political situation should not be a barrier to your education. This is my aim and also that of our Dravidian model of governance
-MK Stalin, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

NEET UNDER THIS REGIME MORE LIKE 'CHEAT': CONGRESS

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Stepping up its attack on the government over the NEET-UG exam issue, the Congress on Friday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "silence" on the matter and asserted that only a Supreme Court-monitored forensic probe can safeguard the future of lakhs of young students.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge claimed that the Modi government has started "covering up the NEET scam" through Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the National Testing Agency. "Has NEET-UG cheating racket not been busted in Gujarat? In which three people are involved including a person running a coaching centre, a teacher and another person and according to Gujarat Police, transactions of more than Rs 12 crore have come to light between the accused?" Kharge said. *—PTI*

J&K TERROR ATTACKS

Shah reviews J&K situation; calls meeting on 16 June

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday reviewed the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of several terror incidents there, including an attack on a bus ferrying pilgrims, sources said.

He called a high-level meeting on 16 June, to be attended by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha, top officials of the Army, CRPF and others to review the prevailing situation in the Union Territory and steps taken to check terror incidents.

During Sunday's meeting, he will also take stock of the preparedness for the annual Amarnath Yatra which will begin on 29 June, sources said.

The Home Minister was briefed about the prevailing situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the steps taken following the terror incidents, they said.

Terrorists struck at four places in Reasi, Kathua and Doda districts of Jammu and Kashmir over the past four days, killing nine pilgrims and a CRPF jawan, and leaving seven security personnel and several others injured.

Amit Shah PHOTO: PTI

Two suspected Pakistani terrorists were also killed in an encounter with security forces in Kathua district.

On Sunday, terrorists opened fire on a 53-seater bus carrying pilgrims when it was en route to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra. The bus, plunged into a deep gorge following the gunfire, killing nine people and injuring 41 others.

On Tuesday, terrorists fired at a joint checkpost of the Rashtriya Rifles and police at Chattergalla in Bhaderwah while a search party in the Gandoh area of Doda district was attacked on Wednesday, resulting in injuries to seven security personnel, including a police personnel. *—PTI*

Former Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan with Tamil Nadu BJP Chief K Annamalai at her residence in Chennai on Friday. Their meeting comes amid speculation that the leaders were at loggerheads following BJP's poor performance in Lok Sabha elections PHOTO: PTI

Shah told me to carry out constituency work: Tamilisai on viral video

CHENNAI, 14 JUNE

BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan said that senior party leader Amit Shah asked her to "carry out political and constituency work intensively", after a video of her interaction with the Union home minister surfaced on social media.

In the video clip from TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu's swearing-in as Andhra Pradesh chief minister on Wednesday, Shah can be seen talking to Soundararajan in an animated manner while gesturing with his finger.

In a post on X on Thursday evening, Soundararajan, who is the former Governor of Telangana, said she met Shah for the first time following the declaration of Lok Sabha poll results and the duo was talking about "post-poll follow-up".

"Yesterday as I met our Honorable Home Minister Sri @AmitShah ji in AP for the first time after the 2024 Elections he called me to ask about post poll followup and the challenges faced.

"As I was elaborating, due to paucity of time with utmost concern, he adviced to carry out the political and constituency work intensively which was reassuring. This is to clarify all unwarranted speculations," she said.

Soundararajan contested from the South Chennai Lok Sabha seat. She lost the election to DMK's Tamizhachi Thangapandian.

Her comment assumes significance in the wake of rumours of an intra-party feud in the Tamil Nadu unit of BJP.

Soundararajan, on her return to Chennai on Wednesday, declined to comment, when she was asked by reporters on the claims of a discord within the party vis-a-vis her interaction with Shah.

Her alleged comments on "criminal elements" in BJP and that "the party would have won had there been an alliance with AIADMK" were among the triggering factors. *—PTI*

LORD RAM STOPPED ARROGANT ONES AT 241: RSS LEADER

JAIPUR, 14 JUNE

In hard-hitting remarks on the outcome of the Lok sabha polls, RSS leader Indresh Kumar on Thursday slammed the ruling BJP for "arrogance" and the opposition INDIA bloc for being "anti-Ram".

Speaking at the 'Ramrath Ayodhya Yatra Darshan Poojan Samaroh' at Kanota near Jaipur, the RSS national executive member did not mention the rivals by name but suggested that the poll outcome reflected their attitudes.

"The party which did the bhakti (of lord Ram) but became arrogant was stopped at 241 but it was made the biggest party," he said, in an apparent reference to Narendra Modi-led BJP which got 240 seats in the Lok Sabha seats.

"And those who had no faith in Ram, they together were stopped at 234," he said, apparently referring to INDIA bloc. "See the 'Vidhan' of Ram Rajya in democracy; those who did 'Bhakti (worshipped) of Ram but gradually turned arrogant, that party emerged as the biggest party, but the vote and power that should have been given was stopped by God due to their arrogance," he said.

"Those who opposed Ram, none of them was given power. Even all of them together were made number two. God's justice is true and enjoyable," he said. *—PTI*

MODI AT G7 SUMMIT IN ITALY

Clockwise from top left: Prime Minister Narendra Modi invites Pope Francis to India during the G7 Summit, in Apulia, Italy on Friday; French President Emmanuel Macron and Modi reviewed India-France bilateral relations, focusing on the 'Horizon 2047' Roadmap and the Indo-Pacific Roadmap; Modi is welcomed by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni; British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Modi discussed strengthening the India-UK strategic partnership PHOTO: PTI

Delhi court adjourns Kejri's bail plea hearing to 19 June

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

A court here on Friday sought Tihar jail's response on Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's application seeking to allow his wife to join a medical board constituted to determine his health condition and treatment.

Additional Sessions Judge Mukesh Kumar directed the authorities concerned to file their reply in the matter by Saturday.

The judge, meanwhile, fixed for 19 June another plea of Kejriwal seeking regular bail in the case. The matter was adjourned after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) sought time to file a reply in the matter.

Kejriwal is lodged in Tihar jail after being arrested in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

He has filed a fresh application seeking his wife to be permitted to join the medical board through video conference.

Arvind Kejriwal PHOTO: PTI

"Application has been moved by the accused seeking directions to allow his wife to join the medical board. Before passing any order, I deem it appropriate to call for a reply from the jail superintendent concerned. The application be kept for tomorrow," the judge said.

During the proceedings, ED sought 10 days to file a reply to the bail application and requested the court to adjourn the matter till 25 June.

The judge, however, said he would consider the accused's convenience for the next date of hearing, not the probe agency's. *—PTI*

SEEKS RS 100 CRORE

Rajat sues Congress leaders for defamation

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Delhi High Court on Friday reserved its order in a plea by veteran journalist Rajat Sharma against Congress party leaders seeking to restrain them from making allegations that Sharma used foul language during his show on the Lok Sharma has sought damages of Rs100 crore for defamation. The lawsuit came up for hearing before a vacation bench of Justice Neena Bansal Krishna who, after hearing arguments on behalf of Sharma, reserved the order on the interim prayer.

"Arguments heard. Order in chamber," the judge said.

Sharma, the Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of Independent News Service Private Limited (INDIA TV), was also present during the hearing.

The controversy arose after Nayak accused Sharma of abusing her on national television during a debate on the show on the counting day of 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Sharma's counsel said while the debate was happening on the channel on the evening of June 4, the day when election results came, the Congress leaders started tweeting only on 10 and 11 June.

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Sharma, contended that a clip of the show was being circulated in which an abuse had been inserted whereas the original footage does not contain any such content.

"There is no abuse. Six days after the live show they tweet that this anchor has used abuse against this lady. They held a press conference on 11 June. On 4 June, she did not say there was any abuse. She did not hear it on that day," the senior lawyer submitted.

Urging the court to grant an ex-parte injunction, the lawyer contended that personal reputation of the journalist was involved and immediate orders are required in such cases.

He prayed that the tweets be taken down immediately as their presence on social media is causing loss to the journalist's reputation earned in the last four decades. *—PTI*

Veteran journalist Rajat Sharm PHOTO: @RAJATSHARMALIVE/X

Yusuf Pathan gets notice for 'encroachment' in Guj

VADODARA, 14 JUNE

The BJP-ruled Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) in Gujarat has sent a notice to former India cricketer and newly elected Trinamool Congress (TMC) Lok Sabha MP Yusuf Pathan for allegedly encroaching on a plot of land the civic body said belongs to it.

While the notice was served to Pathan on 6 June, VMC's standing committee chairman Shital Mistry informed the media on Thursday after the issue was highlighted by former BJP corporator Vijay Pawar.

Former allrounder Pathan won from the Baharampur constituency in the Lok Sabha polls whose results were announced on 4 June.

Talking to reporters earlier in the day, Pawar had alleged that though the state government had rejected VMC's proposal to sell the plot to Pathan in 2012, the newly elected MP had encroached on the plot by constructing a compound wall.

"I don't have any grudge against Yusuf Pathan. A plot in Tanadalja area under TP 22 is a residential plot owned by VMC. In 2012, Pathan had demanded this plot from VMC because his house, which was under construction at that time, was adjacent to that plot. He had offered nearly Rs 57,000 per square metre," Pawar told reporters. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Family loses Rs 5.14 cr in share trading fraud

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

Mumbai police have arrested two people in connection with a case of online share trading fraud, in which a software engineer and his family members lost Rs 5.14 crore, an official said on Friday. The police on Wednesday arrested a tuition teacher and a security guard, who allegedly provided bank accounts to cyber fraudsters for financial transactions, the official said. During the probe, the police examined the bank accounts to which the victims had deposited their money and traced one of them to Hampreetsingh Randhwa, 34, a security guard. Randhwa, a resident of Virar, informed the police that Vimalprakash Gupta, 45, a tuition teacher, had opened a bank account for him and given it to cyber fraudsters for transactions, official said. *—PTI*

6-yr-old raped, killed; accused held in Telangana

KARIMNAGAR, 14 JUNE

A minor girl was allegedly raped and killed by a labourer at a rice mill in Peddapalli district of Telangana, police said on Friday. The accused has been arrested under the POCSO Act. Ramagundam Police Commissioner M Sreenivasulu said the accused Balaram (35), who hails from Madhya Pradesh, was working as a labourer in a rice mill at Sultanabad in Peddapalli district. "The accused took the minor girl, 6, sleeping with her mother at a camp within the rice mill compound in the wee hours of Friday. He raped her and when the girl raised an alarm, he throttled her neck and killed," he said. A case of rape and murder was registered, also invoking relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, he said. *—PTI*

Manipur govt to give Rs 10,000 to flood-hit families

IMPHAL, 14 JUNE

Manipur government has decided to provide Rs 10,000 to every flood-affected family as "immediate relief", an official said on Friday. The decision in this regard was taken during a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Thursday evening, he said. The meeting also "deliberated on several issues of the state and resolved to constitute a cabinet sub-committee for rehabilitation and resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs)", who have been affected by the ethnic violence. More than 1.88 lakh people have been affected and over 24,000 houses damaged, mostly in Imphal Valley, in floods as river embankments were breached triggered by Cyclone Remal. *—PTI*

Teacher opts not to rejoin college after hijab is allowed

KOLKATA, 14 JUNE

The teacher of a private law college in Kolkata, who was allegedly asked not to attend classes wearing a hijab but later told a head scarf can be allowed, said she was not re-joining her workplace. In response, the college said it "honours" her decision. The teacher, Sanjida Qadar, said that she would not "re-join" duties and sent an email to college management conveying her decision. The management of LJD Law College, Tollygunge, in an email to her on 10 June, said she can resume her normal duties abiding by the dress code for the faculty members and "during her classes, she can use dupatta as a head scarf". Qadar had been wearing the headscarf at the workplace since the month of Ramzan (in April) but the issue seemingly escalated over the past week. *—PTI*

Kuwait fire: Bodies of 31 received in Kerala

31 victims include 23 Keralites, 7 Tamilians and 1 from K'taka

KOCHI, 14 JUNE

The mortal remains of 31 Indians, including 23 Malayalees, who died in the Kuwait fire tragedy were received at the international airport here on Friday by Central and state ministers, including Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who paid tributes to the deceased.

An Indian Air Force (IAF) flight carrying the mortal remains of 45 Indians who died in the tragic fire incident in Kuwait two days ago, landed at the international airport at around 10.30am.

Of the 45 mortal remains carried by the IAF C130J aircraft, 31 were received at the airport. The 31 bodies include 23 Keralites, 7 Tamilians and one person from Karnataka, officials said.

Vijayan, speaking to reporters at the airport, said that 'pravasis' (expatriates) were the lifeline of Kerala and the deaths of so many Indian expatriates in the fire was a "huge disaster for the country".

"Measures need to be taken to prevent a recurrence of such an incident and it is hoped that the Kuwaiti government will take the requisite action for the same," Vijayan said.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan lays a wreath on the mortal remains of the Indians who died in the tragic fire incident in Kuwait two days ago, at Cochin International Airport *PHOTO: PTI*

Andhra Pradesh government has said that three migrant workers from the state died in the recent fire incident in Kuwait.

Andhra Pradesh Non-Resident Telugu Society (APNRTS), which is the nodal agency for NRI and migrant matters said T Lokanandam from Srikakulam district, M Satyanarayana and M Eshwarudu from West Godavari district were identified among the deceased.

These three were identified as per the information shared by the New Delhi-based Andhra Pradesh Bhavan (AP Bhavan) with APNRTS.

Meanwhile, Hoshiarpur native Himat Rai, who was among those killed in a devastating fire in southern Kuwait's Mangaf, was the sole breadwinner of his family.

According to official sources, Himat Rai, 62, who originally hails from Salempur village in Hoshiarpur district, was among the victims who lost their lives in the tragic fire in the Middle Eastern country on Wednesday.

Rai's wife, Sarbjit Kaur on Friday said that her husband was the sole breadwinner for the family.

He left India about 28 to 30 years ago and joined NBTC firm in Kuwait to earn his livelihood. He was working as a foreman in the fabrication department of the firm. *—PTI*

Not allowed to visit Kuwait for fire relief efforts: Kerala Min

KOCHI, 14 JUNE

- Leader of Opposition in the state assembly VD Satheesan said it was "unfortunate" that the state health minister was not allowed to travel to Kuwait

Kerala Health Minister Veena George has claimed she was denied permission by the Union Government to travel to Kuwait. The purpose of the visit was to coordinate relief efforts for Keralites affected by a tragic fire incident in the Gulf nation, she said.

"What we just sought from the central government was the permission to travel to Kuwait to stand with our people affected by the tragedy and coordinate activities there. That permission is denied," George told reporters on Thursday night.

The state government had decided to send George to Kuwait to help with the relief efforts, including treatment for the injured and the repatriation of the deceased.

George reportedly waited for hours at the airport, hoping for permission from the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Opposition Congress in Kerala on Friday criticised the Centre's decision denying permission to state Health Minister Veena George to travel to Kuwait to coordinate relief efforts for Malayalees affected by the tragic fire incident in the Gulf nation.

Leader of Opposition in the state assembly VD Satheesan said it was "unfortunate" that the state health minister was not allowed to travel to Kuwait.

"A representative of the state government would have helped to better coordinate the relief efforts.".

"The Central government ought to have immediately given clearance to the state health minister. It was a wrong message from the Centre's side," he said. *—PTI*

Students protest outside Ministry of Education office over the alleged irregularities in NEET 2024 results, in New Delhi, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

NEET row: SC issues notice over NTA's plea

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Supreme Court on Friday issued notices to private parties on a plea of the National Testing Agency seeking transfer of cases pending in various high courts on the NEET-UG row to the top court to avoid multiplicity of litigation.

A vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta took note of the submission of the National Testing Agency's (NTA) counsel that several pleas, seeking cancellation of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test–Under Graduate, 2024 on the allegations of question paper leak and other malpractices, are pending in several high courts.

The NTA, meanwhile, said it wanted to withdraw three other petitions, which were seeking transfer of cases from high courts to the top court, as they pertained to grant of grace marks to 1,563 candidates on account of loss of time during the examination on May 5.

The counsel for the NTA said the issue has been settled and that he will be intimating the high court about the decision to cancel the compensatory marks given to 1,536 candidates and the consequential 13 June order of the top court.

Amid a raging row over the NEET-UG examination, the Centre and the NTA on Thursday told the Supreme Court they have cancelled the grace marks given to 1,563 candidates who took the examination for admission to MBBS and other such courses.

They will have the option to either take a re-test or forgo the compensatory marks awarded to them for loss of time, the centre had said. *—PTI*

RAJKOT FIRE: CO-OWNER HELD, ARRESTS RISE TO 10

RAJKOT, 14 JUNE

Police have arrested a co-owner of the Rajkot game zone, where a fire claimed 27 lives last month, taking the number of arrests in the case to ten, an official said on Friday.

Ashoksinh Jadeja, one of the six owners of the TRP game zone, surrendered before the police on Thursday evening, the official said.

Jadeja, who owns the land on which the game zone had come up, had been absconding after a fire devastated the recreation facility on 25 May in Gujarat's Rajkot city.

Rajkot Police Commissioner Brajesh Kumar Jha confirmed on Friday that Jadeja is in the custody of the crime branch after his surrender.

Earlier, police had arrested five co-owners and a manager of the game zone. They also took into custody four government officials, including Rajkot's Town Planning Officer (TPO) M D Sagathia, assistant TPOs Mukesh Makwana and Gautam Joshi, and former station officer of Kalavad Road fire station Rohit Vigora.

During the probe, it was confirmed that one of the co-owners, Prakash Hiran who was named in the FIR and missing since the tragedy, had died in the deadly fire as he was inside the facility when it was gutted. *—PTI*

Terrorists kept firing even after bus fell in gorge: Reasi attack survivor

GONDA, 14 JUNE

Terrorists kept firing at the bus even after it fell into the gorge, Neelam Gupta, who was one of the 41 injured in the attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, said, recalling the June 9 incident.

Nine people were killed in the attack on the vehicle that was carrying pilgrims from the Shiv Khori temple to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra. The 53-seater bus veered off the road due to indiscriminate firing by the terrorists and fell into the gorge near Teryath village in the Poni.

Neelam was in the bus along with her husband Devi Prasad Gupta, son Prince, daughter Palak, sister Bittan, relative Dinesh Gupta and friend Deepak Kumar Rai, and they all returned home in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district on Thursday night after undergoing treatment in Jammu.

Besides them, Rajesh Gupta, the eighth from the district who was injured in the attack, is still admitted at the Jammu hospital and his condition is critical.

The administrative and police teams of Gonda district reached Jammu to assist us and we are thankful to them, "he said. *—PTI*

Police personnel try to stop Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) workers protesting over the recent terror attacks in J&K *PHOTO: PTI*

Two of explosives factory held day after blast kills 6

Nagpur, 14 June

Police on Friday arrested the director of an explosives factory along with its manager, a day after a blast at the unit located near Nagpur city killed six workers, an official said. Jay Khemka, 49, director of Chamundi Explosives Pvt Ltd, and factory manager, Sagar Deshmukh, were arrested and they will be produced in a court here later during the day, he said. The factory is located in Dhamna village under Hingna police station limits, around 25 km from Nagpur city. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

ED makes fresh arrest in Jal Jeevan Mission case

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Enforcement Directorate has made a fresh arrest in connection with its money laundering investigation into alleged irregularities in the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme being implemented in Rajasthan, official sources said Friday.

Padamchand Jain, proprietor of Shree Shyam Tubewell Company, has been taken into custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) launched by the Union government aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through household tap connections and it is being implemented in Rajasthan by the state's Public Health Engineering (PHE) department.

A man named Piyush Jain was the first to be arrested in this case by the federal agency early this year.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

The suspects were also involved in the purchase of "stolen" goods from Haryana for using the same in their tenders/contracts and had also submitted "fake" work completion letters from IRCON to get PHED contracts, the agency alleged.

Probe found that Padamchand Jain and Mahesh Mittal were involved in securing tenders pertaining to JJM works based on "purported fake work completion certificates issued by IRCON and by bribing senior PHED officials." *—PTI*

'RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS HURT'

Guj HC stays OTT release of 'Maharaj'

AHMEDABAD, 14 JUNE

Gujarat High Court has stayed the release of "Maharaj", the debut film of Bollywood star Aamir Khan's son Junaid, on Netflix after followers of Pushtimarg, a Vaishnava sect of Hinduism, claimed that it would hurt their religious sentiments.

A single-judge bench of Justice Sangeeta Vishen on Thursday passed an order against the film slated for release on Netflix on Friday.

The bench also issued notices to the Centre, Netflix and Yash Raj Films, which has produced the film, and posted the matter for further hearing on 18 June.

Eight members of the Pushtimarg sect filed a petition against the release after they came across articles about the film, apparently based on the famous Maharaj Libel Case of 1862.

Flim is based on famous Maharaj Libel Case of 1862 *PHOTO: x@PTI_News*

The petitioners have claimed that their religious sentiments would be "seriously hurt" if the movie is permitted to be released, and it is likely to affect public order and incite violence against followers of the sect.

The petitioners pointed out that the British-era court, which had decided the libel case, "castigates the Hindu religion and makes seriously blasphemous comments against Lord Krishna as well as the devotional songs and hymns".

They also argued that the movie sought to be released in a secretive manner without a trailer or promotional events to avoid any access to the storyline.

Considering the reach of OTT platforms and immediate distribution worldwide, it would be impossible to rectify the damage caused by the release, the petitioners stated.

1862 libel case was centred on a clash between a Vaishnavite religious leader and social reformer, Karsandas Mulji, who, had alleged that the godman had sexual liaisons with his female devotees. *—PTI*

Northern Bengal districts on alert after Sikkim rains

KOLKATA, 14 JUNE

Following incessant rainfall causing devastation in neighbouring Sikkim resulting in overflowing of the Teesta River, the West Bengal Irrigation department issued an alert for the northern districts of the state, an official said on Friday.

The release of water from the barrages has resulted in rising the water level of the Teesta and because of that there is a threat of flood in areas on both sides of Teesta in Jalpaiguri district, he said.

Teesta is one of the major rivers of the state, and Jalpaiguri district is in the floodplain of this river. Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts in the northern part of West Bengal share borders with Sikkim where rain-triggered landslides left a trail of destruction and six dead people on Thursday.

When contacted, an official of the Jalpaiguri Sadar Sub-Divisional office said the alert has been sounded in all blocks.

"Everything from boats to rescue equipment has been kept ready. Residents have been asked to leave river banks," he said.

In neighbouring Sikkim, at least six people were killed and 1,500-odd tourists stranded as massive landslides triggered by incessant rainfall caused devastation in Mangan district. *—PTI*

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

Youngsters take part in a rally to spread awareness about blood donation on World Blood Donor Day, in Moradabad, on Friday. It has been celebrated each year on 14 June to recognise the life-saving role of voluntary blood donors ***PHOTO: PTI***

India's heatwave affects vendors, Dalits the most

Over 80 per cent of the street vendors surveyed in Delhi reported a decline in customers during heatwave days in April and May, and around 50 per cent experienced significant income loss, according to a new report by the think tank Greenpeace India and the National Hawker Federation.

India's unusually severe heat wave has killed more than 200 people and made tens of thousands ill so far. Amid these extreme weather conditions, there are concerns about the country's marginalized people.

The study, involving 721 street vendors, was conducted in April and May in various locations including Meena Bazaar, Old Delhi Railway Station area, Red Fort area, Nehru Place, Guru Tegh Bahadur Nagar, Karol Bagh, India Gate, Janpath, Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazar Road, Saket, Sarojini Market, among others.

"Data from over 700 respondents highlight the devastating impact on their health, productivity, and livelihoods. We demand immediate government intervention, including the establishment of heat shelters in markets with essential facilities, safety kits, and institutional support for the most vulnerable," said Sandeep Verma, Convener of the National Hawker Federation Delhi.

A large number of respondents experienced health issues due to the hot weather. Irritability was the most common issue, affecting 73.44 per cent of respondents, followed by headaches (66.93 per cent), dehydration (67.46 per cent), sunburn (66.53 per cent), fatigue (60.82 per cent), and muscle cramps (57.37 per cent).

Seven out of eight women street vendors reported experiencing high blood pressure, while women in the middle age group raised concerns about delays in their menstrual cycles due to the extreme heat.

All the women who participated in the study reported that sleeplessness during the night has become quite common due to increased heat, and this results in exhaustion throughout the day.

Seven out of eight women street vendors reported experiencing high blood pressure, while women in the middle age group raised concerns about delays in their menstrual cycles due to heat ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

The participants also flagged the issue of children in their families exhibiting symptoms like vomiting, diarrhoea, and nosebleeds, further complicating the vendors' challenges.

Experts attribute the extreme heat to the naturally occurring El Nino phenomenon -- an unusual warming of the ocean surface in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean -- and the rapidly increasing concentration of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Studies show that rapid urbanisation has exacerbated warming in urban areas, with outdoor workers and low-income households bearing the brunt of the impact.

Low-income households have limited capacity to adapt to extreme heat because of poor access to water and electricity. The design and construction of informal houses often means there is poor ventilation and little shelter from extreme heat

Nearly 25,000 people are believed to have experienced heatstroke during India's summer season, which runs from March through May.

Is caste a heat vulnerability factor in India?

Several studies and media reports highlight the plight of workers in the unorganized sector, which represents a huge chunk of the Indian labour force, especially during sweltering summers — but caste has rarely been recognized as a factor that contributes to heat vulnerability.

Experts say socioeconomic factors can have an impact on people's vulnerability to heat. A study by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) revealed that occupational heat exposure exacerbates social inequalities.

Challenges faced by brick kiln workers

Most labourers at brick kilns are migrants who live in shanties constructed by stacking up bricks on top of each other, with tin sheets or tarpaulin used for the roof.

At times, the migrant workers stay with their families, including children, at the site of the kiln in severely hot temperatures.

Most of the shanties lack basic amenities such as fans and light bulbs. Many of the workers DW spoke with said they arranged for fans on their own. Some employers fail to provide even drinking water. Labourers are forced to search for water in nearby areas, and this scarcity also puts them at risk.

Pathway for inclusive policy to deal with heat waves

The National Disaster Management Authority adopted the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and released its plan in 2016. The initial plan considered only the elderly and disabled as vulnerable groups to natural disasters. However, in 2019, it was revised to include Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in this category. *—PTI/ DW News*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR

Earth's inner core rotation slowing down, finds study

A new study has provided "unambiguous evidence" that the Earth's inner core began to slow down its rotation in 2010, compared to the planet's surface.

Researchers said that the slowing down could change the length of one day on the Earth by fractions of a second.

The Earth's inner core, a solid sphere made of iron and nickel, is suspended within the liquid outer core (made of molten metals) and anchored in its place by gravity. Together, the inner and the outer core, form one of the planet's three layers -- the other two being mantle and crust.

Being physically inaccessible, researchers usually study the core by analysing the recordings of waves sent out by earthquakes -- seismograms.

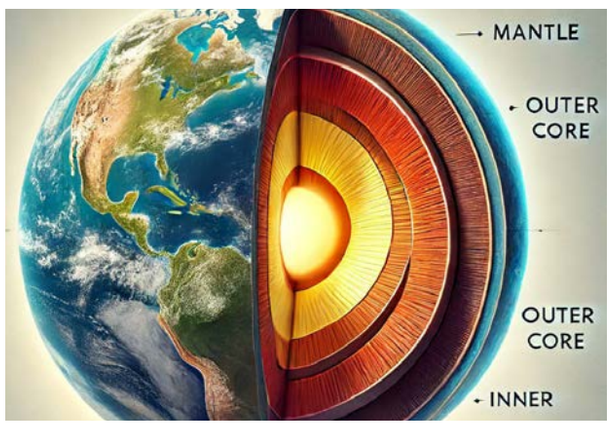
"When I first saw the seismograms that hinted at this change, I was stumped," said John Vidale, a professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Southern California, US.

"But when we found two dozen more observations signalling the same pattern, the result was inescapable. The inner core had slowed down for the first time in many decades," said Vidale, also the corresponding author of the study published in the journal Nature.

The slowing down of the inner core is hotly debated in the scientific community, with some studies even suggesting that it rotates faster than the Earth's surface.

It is known that the spin of the inner core is influenced by the magnetic field generated in the outer core and the gravitational effects within Earth's mantle.

However, it is considered that the inner core is reversing and backtracking relative to the surface, because of rotating slower than the mantle for the first time in about 40 years.



Earth's inner core, a solid sphere made of iron and nickel,is suspended within liquid outer core ***PHOTO: X/ @ASTROINSIGHTS_***

- Since 1972, once every few years, a 'leap second' has been required to be added, arising out of the fact that Earth doesn't always rotate at the same speed

"Other scientists have recently argued for similar and different models, but our latest study provides the most convincing resolution," Vidale said.

A study published earlier this year, in the journal Nature, had found that climate change-driven melting of ice in Greenland and Antarctica was affecting global timekeeping by slowing down Earth's rotation.

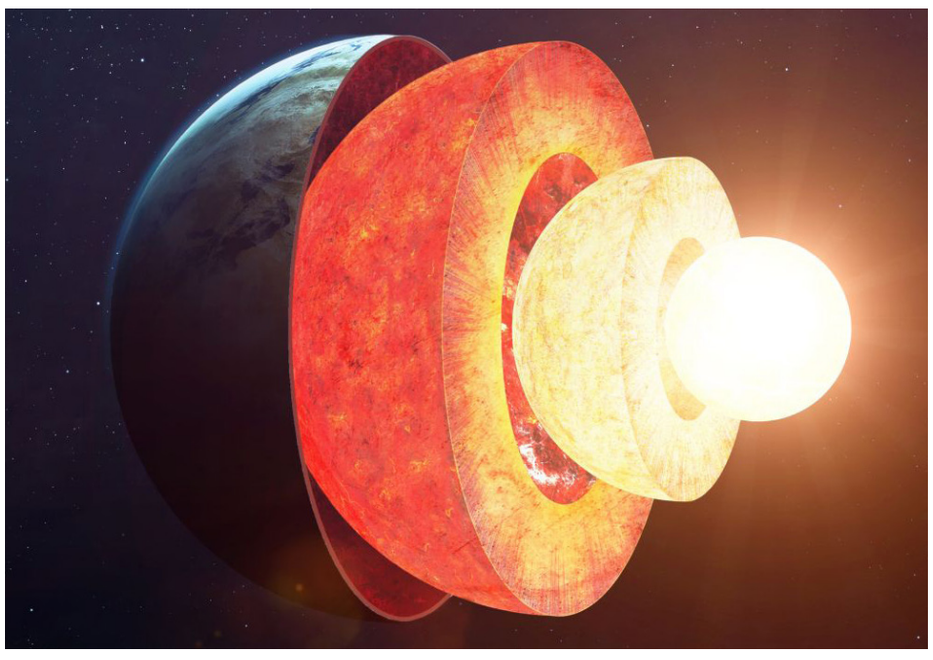
The author, Duncan Agnew, a geophysicist at the University of California San Diego, showed that the Earth's liquid core was slowing down in its rotation. To counter the effects of this, the solid Earth was rotating faster, said Agnew.

However, this has resulted in fewer 'leap seconds' being needed to be added to the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) in recent decades, according to Agnew.

Since 1972, once every few years, a 'leap second' has been required to be added, owing to irregularities in the UTC arising out of the fact that the Earth doesn't always rotate at the same speed.

For the latest study, the researchers looked at seismic data recorded from 121 repeating earthquakes - multiple quakes occurring in the same location - between 1991 and 2023 in the South Sandwich Islands, a remote archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean. The islands are prone to violent earthquakes.

Data from twin Soviet nuclear tests between 1971 and 1974, along with multiple French and American nuclear tests from other studies of the inner core, were also included in the analysis. *—PTI*



The slowing down of the inner core is hotly debated in the scientific community, with some studies even suggesting that it rotates faster than the Earth's surface ***PHOTO: X/ @SPACEDOTCOM***

Can indie games inspire a creative boom from Indian developers?

Slice-of-life game Fishbowl was one of the first backed by Sony's India Hero Project; Despite concerns over gambling and possible addiction, they're big business ***PHOTO: BBC***

India might not be the first country that springs to mind when someone mentions video games, but it's one of the fastest-growing markets in the world.

Analysts believe there could be more than half a billion players there by the end of this year.

Most of them are playing on mobile phones and tablets, and fans will tell you the industry is mostly known for fantasy sports games that let you assemble imaginary teams based on real players.

Despite concerns over gambling and possible addiction, they're big business.

The country's three largest video game startups - Game 24X7, Dream11 and Mobile Premier League – all provide some kind of fantasy sport experience and are valued at over $1bn.

But there's hope that a crop of story-driven games making a splash worldwide could inspire a new wave of creativity and investment.

During the recent Summer Game Fest (SGF) - an annual showcase of new and upcoming titles held in Los Angeles and watched by millions - audiences saw previews of a number of story-rich titles from South Asian teams.

One of those was Detective Dotson by Masala Games, based in Gujarat, about a failed Bollywood actor turned detective.

- Country's three largest video game start-ups - Game 24X7, Dream11 and Mobile Premier League – all provide some kind of fantasy experience

Industry veteran Shalin Shodhan is behind the game and tells BBC Asian Network this focus on unique stories is "bucking the trend" in India's games industry.

He wants video games to become an "interactive cultural export" but says he's found creating new intellectual property difficult.

Another game shown during SGF was The Palace on the Hill – a "slice-of-life" farming sim set in rural India.

Mala Sen, from developer Niku Games, says games like this and Detective Dotson are what "India needed".

Games developed by South Asian teams based in western countries have been finding critical praise and commercial success in recent years.

Venba, a cooking sim that told the story of a migrant family reconnecting with their heritage through food, became the first game of its kind to take home a Bafta Game Award this year.

Canada-based Visai Games, which developed the title, was revealed during SGF as one of the first beneficiaries of a new fund set up by Among Us developer Innersloth to boost fellow indie developers.

That will go towards their new, unnamed project based on ancient Tamil legends.

Another title awarded funding by the scheme was Project Dosa, from developer Outerloop, that sees players pilot giant robots, cook Indian food and fight lawyers.

Its previous game, Thirsty Suitors, was also highly praised and nominated for a Bafta award this year.

Games such as these resonating with players worldwide helps perceptions from the wider industry, says Mumbai-based Indrani Ganguly, of Duronto Games.

British-Indian game developer Charu Desodt believes the success of titles such as Venba has been thanks to their commitment to authenticity.

Charu says funding for "unique and quirky stories has been an issue" but recent successes such as Venba and Thirsty Suitors have shown there is an appetite for south Asian stories told by south Asian developers.

Some of the industry's biggest companies are also paying attention.

Last year, Sony launched its India Hero Project with a goal to "unearth and empower India's brightest game development talents" via mentorship and funding.

Its first cohort of games included slice-of-life games Fishbowl, museum exploration game Mukti and rhythm-action game Suri: the Seventh Note, inspired by mythical Indian stories from the Himalayas to Rajasthan.

Meanwhile french publishing giant Ubisoft's Indie Series has supported Thousand Star Studios in creating Aikyam – a Bollywood-inspired fantasy roleplaying game set to be released this year.

Charu says video games and their interactivity allow people to "understand a concept on a very deep level."

"It's not just about me appreciating my south Asian roots but its about other people really connecting with the authenticity of that experience," says Charu. "We're in the early days as an industry as a whole, even in the west.

"But people now have access to technology and India is also a nation that loves to tell stories." *—BBC News*

PHOTO: ANI

4 from same family killed in Nepal landslide

KATHMANDU, 14 JUNE

Atleast four people from the same family were killed after a landslide triggered by incessant rainfall swept through their house in the Taplejung district in Eastern Nepal on Thursday night. As per the officials, the landslide hit a house in Phattanglung Rural Municipality-2, Tingdu of Taplejung District, some 580 kilometers from the capital Kathmandu overnight. "The landslide claimed the lives of four, from the same family as it swept the house overnight. The other two have been injured in due course of disaster. There was incessant rainfall yesterday and the search operation is still underway as two houses were swept by the landslide," Rajan Limbu, the Chairman of the rural municipality told ANI over the phone. *—ANI*

Baloch residents protest over power cuts in Pak

BALOCHISTAN, 14 JUNE

The residents of Pasni city in the Balochistan province staged heavy protests at the Makran Coastal Highway against heavy power cuts and inconsistencies in the billing system, Balochistan Post reported. This blockade on the Makran Coastal Highway at Zero Point on Thursday caused disruptions for commuters between Karachi and several other cities in the Makran area, including Pasni, Gwadar, Jiwani, and Turbat. Protesters voiced their discontent over what they view as "inequitable electricity billing methods" and regular power interruptions without warning. They asserted that numerous residents are facing financial strain due to excessively high bills. Power interruptions have long plagued Pakistan, casting shadows over daily life.*—ANI*

US scribe to stand trial over Russia espionage charges

MOSCOW, 14 JUNE

Evan Gershkovich, the first American journalist to be arrested on espionage charges in Russia since the Cold War, will stand trial in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg, after being formally accused of spying for the CIA, CNN reported. The Russian Prosecutor General's office said Thursday it had approved the indictment, more than a year after Gershkovich was first detained. If convicted, he faces up to 20 years in prison. Gershkovich, the US government, and his employer, the Wall Street Journal, have vehemently denied the charges against him. Less than two weeks after his arrest, Gershkovich was designated as "wrongfully detained" by the US State Department.*—ANI*

Chinese #MeToo journalist jailed for five years

BEIJING, 14 JUNE

A prominent female #MeToo activist in China has been handed a five-year jail sentence for "subversion against the state". Sophia Huang Xueqin was convicted and sentenced on Friday, nearly 10 months after she went on trial. Labour activist Wang Jianbing, who stood trial with Huang, was sentenced to three years and six months in prison. Huang, 36, had been one of the most prominent voices in China's #MeToo space, reporting ground-breaking stories about sexual abuse victims. She had also spoken out about the misogyny and sexism she faced in Chinese newsrooms. Chinese authorities have not made it clear how the two stood accused of subversion. Huang had been on her way to take up a UK-government sponsored masters scholarship when she was detained at the airport in in 2021.*—BBC News*

Putin pledges truce if Ukraine exits occupied areas

Meanwhile, G7 agrees $50 billion loan to support Ukraine

BORGO EGNAZIA/ MOSCOW, 14 JUNE

Russian President Vladimir Putin promised Friday to "immediately" order a ceasefire in Ukraine and begin negotiations if Kyiv started withdrawing troops from the four occupied Ukrainian regions and renounced plans to join NATO.

Such a deal appears a non-starter for Kyiv, which wants to join the military alliance and has demanded that Russia withdraw its troops from all of its territory.

"We will do it immediately," Putin said in a speech at the Russian Foreign Ministry in Moscow.

His remarks came as leaders of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations met in Italy and as Switzerland prepared to host scores of world leaders -- but not from Moscow -- this weekend to try to map out first steps toward peace in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the G7 has agreed to use frozen Russian assets to raise USD 50 billion for Ukraine to help it fight invading Russian forces.

US President Joe Biden said it was another reminder to Russia "that we're not backing down", but in Moscow President Vladimir Putin said the move was "theft" which would "not go unpunished".

Also at the G7 summit in Italy, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Biden signed a 10-year bilateral security deal between Ukraine and the US, hailed by Kyiv as "historic".

The agreement envisages US military and training aid to Ukraine - but it does not commit Washington to send troops to fight for its ally.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrive for a meeting on Froday in Moscow *PHOTO: PTI*

Pope Francis will be the first pontiff to address a G7 venue

Pope Francis will address G7 leaders— a first for a pope.

- The Argentine pope used his annual peace message this year to call for an international treaty to ensure AI is developed and used ethnically

He intends to use the occasion to join the chorus of countries and global bodies pushing for stronger guardrails on AI following the boom in generative artificial intelligence kick-started by OpenAI's ChatGPT chatbot.

The Argentine pope used his annual peace message this year to call for an international treaty to ensure AI is developed and used ethnically.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni invited Francis and announced his participation, knowing the potential impact of his star power and moral authority to twin a broadly shared concern about AI with his priorities about peace and social justice.

—BBC News/PTI

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and US President Joe Biden, meet for bilateral talks at the G7 in Borgo Egnazia, Italy on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

G7 takes up issue of migration on second day

BARI, 14 JUNE

Leaders of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations are turning their attention to migration on the second day of their summit Friday, seeking ways to combat trafficking and increase investment in countries from where migrants start out on often life-threatening journeys.

Migration is of particular interest to summit host Italy, which lies on one of the major routes into the European Union for people fleeing war and poverty in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Right-wing Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, known for her hard-line stance on the issue, has been keen to increase investment and funding for African nations as a means of reducing migratory pressure on Europe.

Meloni has a controversial five-year deal with neighboring Albania for the Balkan country to host thousands of asylum-seekers while Italy processes their claims. She has also spearheaded the "Mattei Plan" for Africa, a continentwide strategy to increase economic opportunities at home and so discourage migration to Europe.

The United States has also been struggling with a growing number of migrants at its southern border. President Joe Biden introduced new policies to curb migration after a bill he tried to get through Congress failed to pass.

However, immigrant rights advocates filed lawsuits on Thursday over the new policies, and it is unclear whether they will be able to withstand the legal challenges in the US courts. *—PTI*

Houthi missile strikes set ship ablaze, injure 1 crew

DUBAI, 14 JUNE

Yemen's Houthi rebels launched two anti-ship cruise missiles and struck a commercial ship Thursday in the Gulf of Aden off Yemen, setting it on fire and severely wounding one civilian mariner, authorities said.

The M/V Verbena was still ablaze and the mariner was flown by a US helicopter based on the USS Philippine Sea to another nearby ship for medical treatment, the US military's Central Command said.

In a statement, Central Command said the Verbena is a Palauan-flagged, Ukrainian-owned and Polish-operated bulk cargo carrier that had docked in Malaysia and was on its way to Italy carrying wood. "The M/V Verbena reported damage and subsequent fires on board. The crew continues to fight the fire," the statement said.

The attack is the latest such assault in the Houthis' campaign over the Israel-Hamas war.

Earlier Thursday, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) center said a vessel had been attacked and had caught fire. And the private security firm Ambrey said a merchant vessel made a radio distress call saying it had been struck by a missile.

The Houthis later claimed the attack on the Verbena, as well as attacks on two other ships in the Red Sea. Central Command said the Houthis had launched two ballistic missiles in the Red Sea that caused "no injuries or significant damage."

The UKMTO said one vessel earlier missed by the Houthis was hit by a "third projectile" that caused "minor damage." The vessel was able to remain underway, it said.

The attack on the Verbena follows the Houthis launching a boat-borne bomb attack against a commercial ship in the Red Sea on Wednesday.

—PTI

The attack is the latest such assault in the Houthis' campaign over the Israel-Hamas war *PHOTO: X/@LBCI_NEWS_EN*

IRAN EXPANDS ITS NUCLEAR CAPACITIES

DUBAI, 14 JUNE

Iran has started up new cascades of advanced centrifuges and plans to install others in the coming weeks after facing criticism over its nuclear programme, the United Nations' atomic watchdog said Friday. The US called the moves "nuclear escalations".

Spinning up new centrifuges further advances Iran's nuclear programme, which already enriches uranium at near-weapons-grade levels and boasts a stockpile enough for several nuclear bombs if it chose to pursue them. However, the acknowledgement from the International Atomic Energy Agency did not include any suggestion Iran planned to go to higher enrichment levels amid wider tensions between Tehran and the West as the Israel-Hamas war rages in the Gaza Strip.

The IAEA said its inspectors verified that Iran had begun feeding uranium into three cascades of advanced IR-4 and IR-6 centrifuges at its Natanz enrichment facility. So far, Iran has been enriching uranium in those cascades up to 2 per cent purity. *—PTI*

US Supreme Court junks bid to curb abortion pills

WASHINGTON, 14 JUNE

The United States Supreme Court has rejected a bid to restrict access to a medication used in abortions, thereby ending abortion opponents' attempts to limit access to the operation, reported Al Jazeera.

The judges ruled 9-0 on Thursday, overturning a lower court's decision last year to limit access to the medication mifepristone, which is used in more than half of all abortions in the country.

In 2016 and 2021, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made efforts to make it easier to prescribe and distribute the medication.

A recent study found that the pill, which was approved by the FDA in 2000, is used in more than 60 per cent of abortions in the United States, according to Al Jazeera.

In 2022, the conservative-dominated Supreme Court repealed a major rule that granted abortion rights, causing fury among women's rights supporters and Democrats.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Thursday's ruling comes months before the US elections, where reproductive rights have been a major issue in the campaign.

Former President Donald Trump, who is due to face US President Joe Biden in November, selected three of the Supreme Court judges who overturned Roe v Wade, 1973 legal ruling that established the right to abortion. *—ANI*

Pak PM invites former ally to join his coalition

ISLAMABAD, 14 JUNE

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday invited Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, a former ally, to again join the ruling coalition, Dawn reported.

The premier also proposed the formation of a committee to address the prevailing political issues and asked the Maulana to join it.

Sharif is leading a coalition government in Pakistan led by his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Pakistan People's Party has given support to Sharif's party from outside but is not part of the government.

Dawn reported citing a source in the Pakistan PM office, that the JUI-F leader was asked to join the ruling alliance and also play his part by joining a proposed committee to resolve political tensions in the country.

However, a JUI-F spokesperson has said the Maulana refused to join the government at the request of the premier.

"I don't think it's true (that the JUI-F will join the government). Seeking power is not a part of our politics. We already had a better offer before the formation of the present government," he claimed.

Notably, Maulana Fazl led an Opposition alliance, namely the Pakistan Democratic Movement, during the PTI government. The PDM later formed a government in the Centre, led by Sharif, after the ouster of Imran Khan in April 2022. *—ANI*

Shehbaz Sharif *PHOTO: X/@CMShehbaz*

PTI leader sent to judicial remand over 9 May riots

ISLAMABAD, 14 JUNE

A court in Pakistan has sent former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi to a 14-day judicial remand for his suspected role in last year's 9 May riots, ARY News reported.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) appeared in court on Thursday after serving a 19-day physical remand in connection with the riots on 9 May, 2023.

After denying the motion to extend the physical remand, the court placed the PTI leader in judicial remand under police custody for 14 days, the ARY News said. *—ANI*

S Korea, US 'closely monitoring' potential Putin-Kim meeting

PYONGYANG, 14 JUNE

South Korean and United States officials have warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea, which could take place this month and deepen military ties, would be a breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

According to Seoul's foreign ministry on Friday, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Hong-kyun said in an emergency phone call with US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell that Putin's visit should not result in more military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang.

"While closely monitoring related developments, the two sides agreed to resolutely respond through airtight cooperation to North Korea's provocations against South Korea and actions that escalate tensions in the region," the ministry said in a statement.

Campbell also pledged continued cooperation to tackle potential regional instability and challenges caused by the visit.

Rumours about the trip began on Monday after Russia's Vedomosti newspaper reported that Putin would visit North Korea and Vietnam in the coming weeks.

On Thursday, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov declined to give a date for the possible visit. "We have the right to develop good relations with our neighbours and this should not cause concern for anyone," Peskov said.

He added North Korea was a "friendly country for us, with whom we are developing bilateral relations". While Moscow and Pyongyang have denied the claims, the two leaders met in eastern Russia last September and agreed to deepen cooperation, including military relations.

On Wednesday, Campbell said the US has a good understanding of what North Korea has provided Russia, adding that it has had "a substantial impact on the battlefield".

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

UN SECURITY COUNCIL URGES FORCES TO CALL OFF THEIR SIEGE IN SUDAN

KHARTOUM, 14 JUNE

The UN Security Council has demanded that Sudanese paramilitary forces call off their eight-week siege of el-Fasher, a city in the Darfur region where fighting has sparked fears of a possible genocide.

Sudan's army has been fighting the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for more than a year, in a civil war that has killed thousands and forced millions from their homes.

El-Fasher is the last major urban centre in Darfur that remains in the hands of Sudan's army. The security council has called for "an immediate halt to the fighting" and withdrawal of all troops from the city.

The 15-member council on Thursday adopted a British-drafted resolution, with 14 votes in favour, while Russia abstained. It expressed "grave concern" at the spreading violence and reports that the RSF are carrying out "ethnically motivated violence". The resolution called on all parties to allow civilians who wish to leave el-Fasher to do so and remove obstacles to humanitarian access. *—PTI*

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Muslims start Hajj under shadow of war

MINA, 14 JUNE

In sweltering temperatures, Muslim pilgrims in Mecca converged on a vast tent camp in the desert on Friday, officially opening the annual Hajj pilgrimage. Ahead of their trip, they circled the cube-shaped Kaaba in the Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest site.

More than 1.5 million pilgrims from around the world have already amassed in and around Mecca for the Hajj, and the number was still growing as more pilgrims from inside Saudi Arabia joined. Saudi authorities expected the number of pilgrims to exceed 2 million this year.

This year's Hajj came against the backdrop of the raging war in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Palestinian militants.

Palestinians in the coastal enclave of Gaza were not able to travel to Mecca for Hajj this year because of the closure of the Rafah crossing in May when Israel extended its ground offensive to the strip's southern city of Rafah on the border with Egypt.

Pilgrims leave after offering prayers outside at the Grand Mosque during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Palestinian authorities said 4,200 pilgrims from the occupied West Bank arrived in Mecca for Hajj. Saudi authorities said 1,000 more from the families of Palestinians killed or wounded in the war in Gaza also arrived to perform Hajj at the invitation of King Salman of Saudi Arabia.

This year's Hajj also saw Syrian pilgrims travelling to Mecca on direct flights from Damascus for the first time in more than a decade.

The move was part of an ongoing thaw in relations between Saudi Arabia and conflict-stricken Syria. Syrians in rebel-held areas used to cross the border into neighbuoring Turkiye in their exhausting trip to Mecca for Hajj. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold falls Rs 70; silver declines Rs 250

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Gold prices fell Rs 70 to Rs 72,080 per 10g in the national capital on Friday in line with global trends. The precious metal had ended at Rs 72,150 per 10g in the previous session.

Silver prices also declined by Rs 250 to Rs 90,700 per kg. It had closed at Rs 90,950 per kg on Thursday.

"In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading at Rs 72,080 per 10 grams, down by Rs 70 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,310 per ounce, down USD 3 from the previous close. Amid a rise in the US dollar and this week's hawkish US Federal Reserve stance led to a decline in gold prices on Friday, Gandhi said..*—PTI*

Rupee falls 2 paise to close at 83.56 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled 2 paise lower at 83.56 (provisional) against US dollar on Friday, as positive domestic markets and a decline in crude oil prices supported the rupee, while strong US Dollar and FII outflows capped sharp gains.

Forex traders said rupee was seen resilient against the dollar, on hawkish Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting and commentary by the Fed Chair. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.54 and finally settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.56 (provisional) against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 105.61, higher by 0.40 per cent.*—PTI*

Ambuja Cements shares jump 4% to hit 52-week high

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Shares of Ambuja Cements on Friday climbed nearly 4 per cent to hit the 52-week high level after the company announced acquisition of Penna Cement Industries Ltd (PCIL) for an enterprise value of Rs 10,422 crore.

The stock jumped 3.86 per cent to hit its 52-week high of Rs 690 on the BSE.

Ambuja Cements, an Adani group firm, on Thursday announced the acquisition of Penna Cement Industries Ltd. The deal will increase Adani's market share in cement in southern India and give an entry into Sri Lanka, where Penna Cement Industries Ltd operates a unit through a local subsidiary. Besides, this deal will also provide limestone reserves to the growth-hungry Adani group firm.

—PTI

Zydus Lifesciences gets USFDA nod for blood pressure drug

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Zydus Lifesciences Ltd on Friday said it has received tentative approval from the US health regulator to market Azilsartan Medoxomil and Chlorthalidone tablets, which are indicated for the treatment of high blood pressure. The tentative approval by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is for Azilsartan Medoxomil and Chlorthalidone tablets of strengths 40 mg/12.5 mg and 40 mg/25 mg, Zydus Lifesciences said in a regulatory filing. Azilsartan and Chlorthalidone are diuretic combination products indicated for the treatment of high blood pressure to lower blood pressure, it added. The drug will be manufactured at the group's formulation manufacturing facility in Ahmedabad SEZ- II, India, the company said. Azilsartan Medoxomil and Chlorthalidone tablets had annual sales of USD 77.9 million in the US, Zydus Lifesciences said citing IQVIA MAT March 2024 data.

—PTI

Inflation rises to 15-month high of 2.61%

Heatwave conditions push up prices of foods and make manufactured products costlier

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The wholesale inflation rose to a 15-month high of 2.61 per cent in May, as heatwave conditions pushed up prices of food items, specially vegetables, and on costlier manufactured products.

The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation has been rising for three months in a row. It was 1.26 per cent in the previous month and (-) 3.61 per cent in May 2023.

"Positive rate of inflation in May, 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, manufacture of food products, crude petroleum & natural gas, mineral oils, other manufacturing etc," the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement on Friday.

The May WPI print is at a 15-month high. The last high was seen in February, 2023, when inflation was 3.85 per cent.

As per the data, inflation in food articles rose to a 10-month high of 9.82 per cent in May.

Inflation in food articles rose to a 10-month high of 9.82 per cent in May PHOTO: PTI

Inflation in vegetables was 32.42 per cent in May, up from 23.60 per cent in the previous month. Onion inflation was at 58.05 per cent, while potato was 64.05 per cent. Pulses inflation rose 21.95 per cent in May.

Bank of Baroda Economist Aditi Gupta said food inflation is also likely to remain elevated due to severe heatwave in the country. Progress of the monsoon will play a key role in determining the trajectory of food inflation going forward.

"With severe heatwave conditions persisting in several parts of the country, prices of vegetables and fruits are witnessing an upward momentum even in June '24 and are likely to keep inflation elevated in the near-term," Gupta said.

Besides, an uptick in global metal prices has contributed to an increase in inflation in the manufacturing category. In manufactured products, inflation was at 0.78 per cent in May, higher than (-) 0.42 per cent in April.

Barclays Economist Shreya Sodhani said sequentially, the price index for manufacturing (which has the highest weight in the WPI, at 64 per cent), has risen sequentially for the fourth straight month, indicating that firms' input costs are rising. In the fuel and power basket, inflation stood at 1.35 per cent, marginally lower than 1.38 per cent in April.

The rise in May WPI is in contrast to the retail inflation data for the month. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mainly takes into account retail inflation while framing monetary policy.

Retail inflation eased to 1 year low of 4.75 per cent in May, data released earlier this week showed. RBI earlier this month kept the interest rate unchanged for the eighth time in a row. Sodhani said while WPI was in deflation all of last year, the rise in wholesale prices this year is expected to gradually feed into retail prices, if firms' pricing power improves and consumption revives. *—PTI*

'INFLATION TO STAY AT 4.5% THIS YEAR'

KOLKATA, 14 JUNE

Leading ratings and economic research firm CRISIL is of the view that inflation is expected to average 4.5 per cent for the current financial year.

"Assuming a normal monsoon, we expect food inflation to soften, while non-food inflation could see an uptick but is expected to remain soft on the back of benign commodity prices," CRISIL said.

The rating firm said that consumer price index (CPI) inflation moderated marginally to 4.75 per cent in May from 4.8 per cent in April 2024.

"Non-food categories pulled down the headline inflation, but what is worrying is the relentless inching up of food categories, cereals and pulses", CRISIL said. Food inflation had stayed above 8.5 per cent for four months now.

—PTI

BHEL bags ₹7,000 cr deal from Adani firm

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

State-owned BHEL on Friday said it has secured orders for two power plants worth Rs 7,000 crore from Adani Power.

The first order for the 2x800 MW Raipur supercritical thermal power plant, being set up in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh, has been received from Adani Power Limited, BHEL said in a statement.

The second order for the 2x800 MW Mirzapur supercritical thermal power plant, being set up in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh, has been received from MTEUPPL (a subsidiary of Adani Power Limited), it said. BHEL's scope for both projects includes the manufacture and supply of main plant equipment and associated auxiliaries, along with supervision of erection and commissioning. Key equipment for the projects, including steam generators, steam turbines, and generators, will be manufactured at the company's Trichy and Haridwar plants. BHEL, under the Ministry of Heavy Industries, is India's largest engineering and manufacturing enterprise, operating in the energy, industry and infrastructure sectors. *—PTI*

FinMin invites industry views on tax rates, laws ahead of Budget

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Finance Ministry has invited suggestions on direct and indirect taxes and changes in laws to reduce compliances for the 2024-25 Budget from trade and industry associations.

The suggestions are to be sent to the Ministry by 17 June and the full budget for 2024-25 is expected to be presented in Parliament in the second half of July.

The suggestions are to be sent to the Ministry by 17 June PHOTO: PTI

The suggestions could include changes in the duty structure, rates and ideas on broadening of tax base on both direct and indirect taxes giving economic justification for the same, as per the ministry.

For changes in customs and excise duties, the trade and industry would have to supplement and justify their demand with relevant statistical information about production, prices, and revenue implication of the changes suggested.

The request for correction of inverted duty structure would have to be supported by value addition at each stage of manufacturing of the commodity.

With regard to direct taxes, the ministry said the suggestions could be also on reducing compliances, providing tax certainty and reducing litigations. It said the government policy in the medium term is to phase out tax incentives, deductions and exemptions while simultaneously rationalising rates of tax. *—PTI*

INDIA'S EXPORTS UP 9% TO $38.13 BILLION IN MAY

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

India's merchandise exports in May 2024 rose by 9 per cent to USD 38.13 billion, from USD 34.95 billion in the year-ago month, according to government data released on Friday. Imports too increased by 7.7 per cent to USD 61.91 billion, from USD 57.48 billion in May 2023.

Trade deficit, or the gap between imports and exports, during the month under review stood at USD 23.78 billion. Briefing media on the data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said May has been an excellent month in terms of exports and "I hope that this trend will continue".

In April 2024, outbound shipments rose by one per cent to USD 35 billion. *—PTI*

BUYING IN RELIANCE, HDFC

Market hits fresh lifetime highs

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty hit their new closing lifetime highs on Friday, following buying in market heavyweights HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and Mahindra & Mahindra amid encouraging export data.

Rising for the third straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 181.87 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 76,992.77. During the day, it jumped 270.4 points or 0.35 per cent to 77,081.30.

The NSE Nifty rallied 66.70 points or 0.29 per cent to hit a record closing high of 23,465.60. Intra-day, it rose 91.5 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a fresh all-time high of 23,490.40.

Among the 30 Sensex companies, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Tata Motors and Asian Paints were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro, HCL Technologies, Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of India were among the major laggards.

PHOTO: PTI

India's merchandise exports in May 2024 rose by 9 per cent to USD 38.13 billion, from USD 34.95 billion in the year-ago month, according to government data released on Friday.

Imports also increased by 7.7 per cent to USD 61.91 billion from USD 57.48 billion in May 2023.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled higher, while Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were quoting lower in mid-session deals. US markets ended on a mixed note on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,033 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

TO BOOST SPENDING

SEBI bats for tax benefits to 'zero coupon zero principal bond' firms

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

To encourage social sector spending, markets regulator Sebi has suggested that the government should allow tax benefits to companies investing in zero coupon zero principal bonds issued by not-for-profit organisations listed at the social stock exchange.

Talking to reporters here on Friday, Sebi's Whole Time Member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney said the regulator has already sent a proposal to the finance ministry and is hopeful of getting the approval.

Moreover, the CBDT has already clarified that investors or donors buying such bonds will get the tax benefits under section 8OG of Income Tax rules, he added.

These measures will be pertinent towards inclusive growth of the social sector and will help build trust and expand the donor base for the organisations, he said.

The 'zero-coupon, zero-principal' are instruments for donating money to non-profit organizations listed on the SSE.

The Social Stock Exchange (SSE) is a novel concept in India and such a bourse is meant to serve private and non-profit sector providers by channelling greater capital to them. The idea was floated by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Union Budget 2019-20 speech.

SSE is a separate segment of the existing stock exchanges that bring together social enterprises and donors, facilitates funding and growth of social enterprises and enables mechanisms to ensure robust standards of social impact and financial reporting.

Moreover, Sebi has been taking measures to widen the participation of subscribers at the social stock exchange. In November, the regulator reduced the issue size of ZCZP from Rs 1 crore to Rs 50 lakh. It has also reduced the minimum application size for donors to Rs 10,000 from Rs 2 lakh. *—PTI*

SEBI has been taking measures to widen the participation of subscribers at the social stock exchange PHOTO: PTI

Whatsapp video calling to now support 32 people

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

WhatsApp updated the video calling features across devices by adding audio support in screen sharing, introducing a new speaker spotlight feature. The instant-messaging platform also improved support for video call participants to up to 32 people.

WhatsApp announced a series of updates on Thursday to enhance the calling experience for its users across desktop and mobile devices.

Since the introduction of WhatsApp in 2015, the platform has continued to evolve with the addition of group calls, video calls, and multi-platform support.

WhatsApp announced a series of updates on Thursday PHOTO: PIXABAY

Now, the latest updates set to roll out over the next few weeks are poised to take calling to a whole new level.

Furthermore, the addition of the speaker spotlight feature will greatly enhance the user experience, making it easier to identify who is speaking during a call, with the speaker automatically highlighted and appearing first on the screen.

These updates mark a significant step forward in enhancing the overall quality of calls on WhatsApp, with a relentless focus on audio and video excellence.

WhatsApp has also made significant strides in improving audio and video quality, ensuring clearer calls regardless of the user's location.

—ANI

NSE CHIEF CHOUHAN WARNS RETAIL INVESTORS

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

National Stock Exchange (NSE) chief Ashishkumar Chauhan on Friday cautioned retail investors against trading in derivatives and suggested them to invest in equities through mutual fund route.

He emphasised that trading in Futures & Options (F&O) derivatives should be limited to informed investors who can manage risk and comprehend the market.

Recently, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran flagged the growing risk of F&O trading for retail investors. In November 2023, Sebi chief Madhabi Puri Buch also cautioned investors against heavy bets on F&O.

He cautioned that while derivatives have their utility, it should only be traded by those who fully understand the risks and have the capacity to manage them. Those lacking this understanding or risk appetite should avoid derivatives trading. *—PTI*

HQ TO BE MOVED

Tesla shareholders approve Musk's $45bn pay package

AUSTIN, 14 JUNE

Tesla shareholders have backed a record-breaking pay package for boss Elon Musk and approved a plan to move the firm's legal headquarters to Texas.

The deal was blocked earlier this year by a judge in Delaware over concerns it was unfair to shareholders.

The vote is a victory for the multi-billionaire, who had campaigned fiercely for the payout, which is worth up to $56bn. The exact amount depends on the Tesla share price.

The deal is worth an estimated 300 times what the top-earning boss in the US made last year.

However, the vote is not binding and legal experts have said it is not clear if the court that blocked the deal will accept the re-vote and allow the company to restore the pay package. *—PTI*

Elon Musk PHOTO: ANI

"The vote changes nothing," said Mathieu Shapiro, a managing partner at law firm Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel.

"It only offers Tesla opportunities to try to use the vote to obtain a better decision going forward.

The eye-popping sum had sparked criticism and raised concerns that the board of Tesla was too submissive and close to Musk.

In the January court ruling, Delaware judge Kathaleen McCormick ruled the sum was "unfair" and the process for determining the package, by a board dominated by Musk, was "deeply flawed".

Chancellor McCormick had pointed out that Antonio Gracias, who had been a board director at Tesla, had "the sort of personal relationship that had him vacationing with Musk's family on a regular basis".

Musk announced that he wanted to move the firm's legal headquarters to Texas after the court in Delaware, where it is currently incorporated, voided his pay package, siding with a small investor who had sued over the deal.

The fight over the plan had aired concerns about Musk's leadership, at a time when Tesla's share price has fallen from its height and its position in the electric car industry is under pressure.

—BBC News

PHOTO: PTI

Pakistan may face T20 World Cup elimination

FLORIDA, 14 JUNE

Pakistan's hopes of qualifying for the T20 World Cup 2024 Super Eight stage hinge on their match against Ireland on Sunday. Even a narrow win could secure their spot, provided the USA loses to Ireland on Friday. However, the situation is complicated by the state of emergency declared in Fort Lauderdale due to life-threatening flash floods in Florida. The severe weather has disrupted many aspects of life in Fort Lauderdale, including the grounding of hundreds of flights. The Lankan cricket team, participating in the T20 World Cup, is currently stranded in the city. Fort Lauderdale, one of the three venues in the USA scheduled to host the T20 World Cup matches, has already seen one game washed out due to heavy rain.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Afghanistan storms into Super Eight beating PNG

TAROUBA, 14 JUNE

Left-arm pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi, who continued his brilliant form, and Naveen-ul-Haq led Afghanistan's seven-wicket rout of Papua New Guinea that also sealed their maiden Super Eight entry in the T20 World Cup here. Gulbadin Naib scored an unbeaten 49 as Afghanistan gunned down the target of 96 in 15.1 overs overcoming early jitters. Earlier, PNG were bundled out for 95. The result also meant that New Zealand, the 2021 finalists, have been knocked out of the ICC showpiece. The Kiwis find themselves at the bottom of the table with two defeats from as many matches. The tournament co-hosts West Indies have already entered the Super Eight from Group C with six points.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Jeev, Randhawa in second round of Lawrie Matchplay

HERTFORDSHIRE, 14 JUNE

Jeev Milkha Singh and Jyoti Randhawa won their first-round clashes to move into the next round of the Paul Lawrie Matchplay event on the Legends Tour for Seniors in Europe here. Both the Indians won 1-up as they maintained their lead after going one ahead of the 16th. Jeev beat Paul Streeter, while Randhawa got the better of Thomas Gogele. Jeev will take on Keith Horne in the second round, while Randhawa will play Malcolm Mackenzie, who beat 2006 Ryder Cup captain Ian Woosnam in the first round.—*PTI*

Honda India unveils line-up for Talent Cup

CHENNAI, 14 JUNE

Mohsin Paramban, who competes in the Asia Road Racing Championship, and young Rakshith S Dave will be followed keenly along with six new riders at the 2024 Honda India Talent Cup, which will kick off here this weekend. Talent Cup is a platform for nurturing and promoting young racing talent in India and Mohsin made his way to AARC through the series. A total of 14 young riders will have Honda's Moto3 machine the NSF250R at their disposal in the five-round season with Savion Sabu, Rakshitha S Dave, Jagathishree Kumaresan, Aaron Soni Fernandez, Steve Waugh Sugi and Vignesh Pothu joining the roster.—*PTI*

T20 WORLD CUP

England eye dominant show to stay in Super 8

Ousted New Zealand search elusive win

NORTH SOUND, 14 JUNE

Defending champions England will be eager to brush aside Namibia ruthlessly here on Thursday and stay relevant in the race to the T20 World Cup Super Eight stage.

England was living on the edge after a washout against Scotland and a loss against Australia, but the Jos Buttler-led side turned it around in style with an eight-wicket win over Oman.

After bundling out Oman for 47, England raced past the target in just 3.1 overs, with a record margin of 101 balls to spare.

The result has also done wonders for England's net run rate (NRR), the crucial separating factor between them and Scotland in Group B. The Three Lions' NRR leapt from -1.8 to +3.08, going past Scotland's +2.16.

In that scenario, England will enter Super Eight with better NRR, but an upset win over Australia by Scotland or a washout at Gros Islet will eliminate Buttler and his wards.

"I've been around long enough to know how it works," Buttler said after their win over Oman. "We know what's going on in the dressing room. We have lots of confidence in our team and we have another huge match to come," he added.

England will be eager to brush aside Namibia and NZ will take on Uganda PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

England bowlers such as leg-spinner Adil Rashid (4/11) and the pace duo of Jofra Archer and Mark Wood, who claimed identical figures of 3/12, exploited it to their advantage while bowling out Oman for their lowest ever T20I total of 47 the overall fourth-lowest in the T20 World Cup.

Buttler will hope to win the toss again to unleash his bowlers against the inexperienced Namibia who had folded for 72 in their last match against Australia.

Match starts: 10.30 pm IST

Evicted NZ search elusive win

New Zealand will take on Uganda at the pace-friendly Tarouba in what will be the first of their two dead rubbers of this T20 World Cup.

Afghanistan pushed the Kiwis out of the Super Eight race from Group C following their win over Papua New Guinea here.

It meant that the Black Caps have failed to advance from the group stage in a World Cup for the first time in a decade, across ODI and T20 formats.

The Kiwis will hope that they will head back home with their heads held high securing wins over newcomers Uganda and PNG.

Their aging batters have looked woefully out of sorts and desperately in need of a revival, even as bowlers had their moments.

Match starts: at 6 am IST

SA face Nepal, aim four in four

Having already stormed into the Super Eight, South Africa will take on Nepal in a clash between Group D table-toppers and wooden spooners at Kingstown.

Anrich Nortje, who is the joint second leading wicket-taker with eight scalps, has been in splendid form, and he will look to make life tough for Nepal batters.

The Proteas would also hope that their top-order in Quinton De Kock, Reeza Hendricks, skipper Aiden Markram, and Tristan Stubbs to get back their mojo ahead of the Super Eight.

Match starts: at 5 am IST

—*PTI*

Deepika Kumari PHOTO: X / @INDIA_ALLSPORTS

Olympics: India women archers lose to Ukraine

ANTALYA, 14 JUNE

The Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Bhajan Kaur, and Ankita Bhakat squandered their lead to suffer a shock 3-5 loss to lower-ranked Ukraine in the pre-quarterfinals of the Final Olympic Qualifier here on Friday.

Having qualified as the fifth seed, India got a bye into the pre-quarters and needed two wins in the elimination round to seal the Paris Olympic team quota place. The four semifinalists in the women's recurve section get team quotas.

But the world No. 8 India, who are 10 notches above Ukraine in the global rankings, put up an atrocious display to blow away a 3-1 lead and went down 3-5 (51-51, 55-52, 53-54, 52-54).

The inexperience of Bhajan and Ankita cost India dearly as the duo lost composure and shot in the seven-point red ring once each in the drawn first set.

India managed to bounce back with a superior second set where all of them shot nine each before Deepika landed a perfect 10 to take the second set. But in the third set, Bhajan once again dropped her arrow to the seven-point ring that helped Ukraine level three-all going into the fourth set.

India needed a draw in the fourth set to take the match to shoot-off, but this time they shot twice in the eight-point red ring -- one each by Bhajan and Deepika -- as Veronika Marchenko, Anastasia Pavlova and Olha Chebotarenko edged them out by two points and seal their quarters berth.

The men's team qualifying event will be held on Saturday and will see stiff competition among 46 teams for just three available quotas. —*PTI*

Gill and Avesh set to be released after India's group league matches

SYDNEY, 14 JUNE

Gill and Avesh Khan PHOTO: PTI

Reserve opener Shubman Gill, and speedster Avesh Khan are all set to be released from the Indian set-up after the team's final T20 World Cup group league game against Ireland here on Saturday.It is understood that going into the Super Eights stage, the team management is pretty certain that they don't need to carry four standbys and hence only designated finisher Rinku Singh and left-arm fast medium Khaleel Ahmed will accompany the team during the Caribbean leg of the tourney."Shubman and Avesh were supposed to only stay till the group league stages in the United States. That was pre-decided. So, after the Ireland game, they will be released from the squad," a senior BCCI source privy to the development told PTI on condition of anonymity.The logic to release Gill and Avesh is pretty straightforward.

—*PTI*

Indian challenge ends after Prannoy's exit

SYDNEY, 14 JUNE

India's top-ranked singles player HS Prannoy went down to higher-ranked Kodai Naraoka of Japan 19-21, 13-21 as none among the country's shuttlers failed to progress beyond the quarterfinals of the Australian Open Super 500 event here on Friday.

The world No. 10 Prannoy was the latest to be eliminated on a day when his singles compatriot Sameer Verma, mixed doubles pair of Sikki Reddy and B Sumeeth Reddy along with Aakarshi Kashyap in women's singles also drew blank. Prannoy made a rally from being 10-16 down to level the proceedings at 18-all before taking a one-point lead but Naraoka held his nerves to seal the first game.

Naraoka was far superior in the second game as he suddenly upped the ante at 5-5 without giving Prannoy any scope of a comeback to seal the match in little more than an hour. Fresh from his upset victory over former world No. 1 Loh Kean Yew, Verma was no match for his world No. 17 opponent Chinese Taipei opponent Lin Chun-Yi who cruised to a 21-12, 21-13 win in 38 minutes.

HS Prannoy PHOTO: X / @INDIA_ALLSPORTS

In the mixed doubles, the eighth-seeded husband-wife duo of Summeth and Sikki also faced tough opposition in the top-seeded pair of Jian Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Xin, who took just about half an hour to secure an easy 21-12 21-14 victory. —*PTI*

McIlroy heads out early at Pinehurst

HAMBURG, 14 JUNE

Second-round action at the U.S. Open got underway at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina on Friday with overnight co-leader Rory McIlroy heading out early with hopes of inching closer to an elusive fifth major title.

The Northern Irishman, whose last major triumph came at the PGA Championship in August 2014, finished the first round level with Patrick Cantlay at five under and was set to tee off at 7:29 a.m. ET (1129 GMT) from Pinehurst No. 2's 10th hole.

Clear skies greeted the early starters on what was expected to be a steamy day with temperatures reaching 94 degrees Fahrenheit (34.4 Celsius).

—*AP*

Sumit Nagal enters Perugia Challenger semis

PERUGIA, 14 JUNE

Sumit Nagal continued his splendid form by entering the semi-final of the ongoing Perugia Challenger here on Friday.

The sixth-seeded Indian overcame the challenge from the unseeded Maks Kasnikowski of Poland in the quarterfinal, winning in straight sets 6-4, 7-5. This is his eighth successive win since the start of the Heilbronn Challenger in Germany.

In the semi-final on Saturday, he will be taking on the winner of the other quarterfinal clash between the unseeded Bernabé Zapata Miralles of Spain and second seed Laslo Djere of Serbia.

Sumit Nagal PHOTO: PTI

Earlier in the event, Nagal had been victorious against the unseeded German Fatic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the opening round before being successful against the unseeded Alessandro Giannessi of Italy in the pre-quarterfinal.

Nagal is coming off a title triumph during the Heilbronn Challenger last week, which happens to be his second Challenger title this season after the Chennai Challenger in February.

He is currently ranked 77th in the ATP Singles Ranking, which has ensured him a spot in the Paris Olympics next month. —*PTI*

Aditi makes a solid start with 4-under 68

BELMONT, 14 JUNE

Aditi Ashok opened her challenge at the Meijer LPGA Classic with one of her best rounds of the season, carding a 4-under 68 for a tied 11th place here.

Aditi's round started on the tenth with birdies on the 11th and the 12th holes. A bogey on the 17th followed by a birdie on the 18th saw her turn in 2-under. On the second nine, the front side of the Par-72 Blythefield Country Club, she parred till she picked birdies on the eighth and the ninth, her final two holes.

Two of her five birdies came on Par-5s on a course that has five Par-5s.

Aditi's best round this season before this was also 68 at the Honda LPGA in Thailand in February and she finished tied 31 in the event. Her best finish this season has been 21st at the HSBC World Championships.

Mahreen starts well on arain-hit day in Singapore Ladies Masters

Making her first appearance ina professional event outside the country, Indian amateur Mahreen Bhatia shot aone-under through nine holes and was lying tied for 10th on a rain- hit day at theSinga- pore Ladies Masters.

China's Cai Danlin, looking for her first pro win, gotoff to a solid start with a 5-under 67 and took the clubhouse lead.

AmateurRuolin Song of China was second at 4-under for the round.Around half the field had finished as almost four hours of play was lost.

The remaining players will return early to completetheir first round. —*PTI*

EURO 2024

Italy opens title defence against Albania in Group B

MUNICH, 14 JUNE

Italy begins the defence of its European Championship title against Albania on Saturday in their first Group B match. The other teams in the group are Spain and Croatia. Kickoff is at 9 p.m. local (1900 GMT) in Dortmund. Here's what to know about the match:

Italy is back at a major tournament after failing to qualify for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. That was the second straight World Cup that the Azzurri missed, though they won Euro 2020 in between.

Italy first played at Borussia Dortmund's stadium in 2006 — and it was a classic game in the World Cup. A semifinal match against Germany went to extra time at 0-0 before goals by Fabio Grosso and Alessandro Del Piero sealed a 2-0 win.

Albania is playing in the Euros for the second time. The first occasion was in 2016 and the team failed to get out of its group.

Italy football players are seen during a practice session ahead of the UEFA Euro 2024 football match against Albania PHOTO: X / @EURO2024

Davide Frattesi should be available for Italy after returning to training following a minor groin injury. Nicolò Barella and Nicolò Fagioli have both been training separately this week as they recover from muscle issues.

After finishing the season well with Europa League champion Atalanta, Gianluca Scamacca seems to have won the tussle with Mateo Retegui born in Argentina but eligible to play for Italy through his maternal grandmother to be Italy's starting striker. Still to be determined is whether coach Luciano Spalletti goes with a four-man defense or three at the back with wingbacks. It'll likely be the latter.

Albania coach Sylvinho, the former Barcelona, Arsenal, and Brazil left-back who was sworn in as an Albanian citizen last month, has no reported injuries to worry about ahead of the match. Armando Broja is expected to start up front despite barely featuring for Fulham in a loan spell from Chelsea in the second half of the season.

Italy is seeking a third European Championship title after winning the 1968 and 2020 tournaments. The Italians were also runners-up in 2000 and 2012.

Italy has won all four of its meetings with Albania. All of them have been played since 2014. Albania conceded eight goals on its last appearance at Dortmund's stadium. That was in 1981 when the national team lost 8-0 to West Germany.

Ten members of Albania's squad play in one of Italy's top two leagues.

What they're saying "Perhaps this is a slightly younger group, with fewer years on the pitch. But this is a strong group with an equally strong coach." Italy midfielder Bryan Cristante compares Spalletti's current squad with the Euro 2020 winners led by Roberto Mancini.

"If they win, I will not speak to Frattesi for days. And if we win, I think he will not speak to me!" – Albania midfielder Kristjan Asllani, who plays at Inter Milan alongside Frattesi.

—*PTI*